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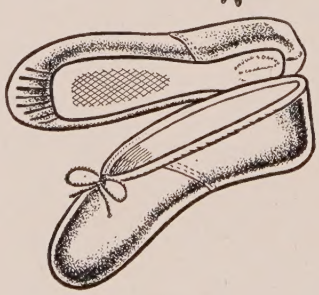

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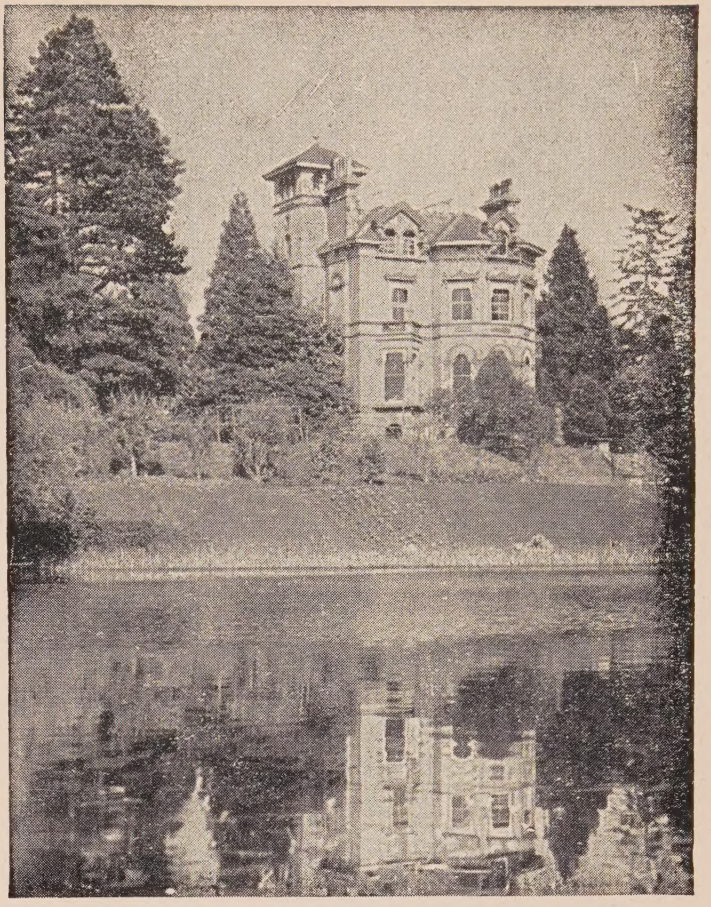

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January, 1952 Vol. 3. No. 1

Dance and Dancers

Editor: PETER WILLIAMS *Foreign Editor:* DAVID RAHER
Assistant Editor: CLIVE BARNES
WORLD'S LARGEST NET SALE IN THE FIELD

WHEN DANCE AND DANCERS was about to make its first appearance in the twelfth month of 1949, Frederick Ashton said to me, "I hear you are bringing out a new ballet magazine," then added rather dubiously, "Well, as long as there is room for a new ballet, I suppose there is also room for a new magazine."

That was two years ago, and in spite of gloomy forebodings on the part of many people, in spite of innumerable set-backs (not the least being the difficulty in obtaining the right paper) always attendant upon any sort of publishing in these times, we find ourselves on the brink of a third year.

I have always said that it takes a magazine over a year to find its form and its own level. So, for better or for worse, the form in which you now find it is how it will continue. Naturally there will be changes with new features added and others, if we consider them to be unsuccessful, discarded. The growing thousands who read the magazine, are proof that the present form is not far wrong.

We have been lucky in the fact that never before, in the history of ballet, has it been so popular as in the past two years. Never before were there so many companies who continued to attract big audiences into the theatres where they played. I do not wish to sound gloomy but I am pretty certain the reckoning is at hand—the boom is over. The warning finger is pointing at those empty seats for which people would ballot only a few months ago.

What is the reason? There is certainly very little money floating about though even in the deepest depression people will pay to see something that is really good.

No, there is a far far more serious reason for it all. The truth is that the public have become too wise. This new post-war audience, upon whose heads so much scorn was once poured, has now seen enough ballet to know what it likes and wants. The public is the final critic and it is turning out to be a very good one. It is no good to just throw on the second act of *Swan Lake* because "people like the music." Those days are past.

If ballet is to continue to command any respect, a lot of belt-tightening will have to go on. So many dancers and companies have come sweeping in on the surf-board of ballet popularity that they will soon find themselves on the beach without any waves to carry them further.

We have seen a lot that was exciting and wonderful but we have also seen much that caused us excruciating agony—ballets that should never have seen the light of day, dancers who would be better employed elsewhere. This is a time to stock-take, and for everyone, connected in any way with ballet, to consider whether they are satisfied that they have attained perfection. There are organisations for experimentation and there is room for many more. In the theatre only the best is good enough. A mediocre play does not survive so why should ballet expect a better fate.

The principal ballet magazines in this country have their special place, they are designed to appeal to different sections of the community. Ballet companies should be in the same position but apart from the few, they are trying to crowd each other out and if we are not careful everyone will be crowded into oblivion. With this rather sombre thought I look forward to a year in which good sense will prevail, a year in which our pages can reflect something of true greatness, a year when DANCE AND DANCERS gets back to its right publishing date (this should occur in the very near future).

CONTRARY to what many people imagine, the compilation of a magazine takes rather a lot of hard work. It is not the actual act of just putting the pages together, it is the planning that causes those creases between the eyebrows.

But during the past two years, all the complications and disappointments have been nullified by the letters I receive from readers. Many of them, of course, are full of complaints but even these are exhilarating.

When so many of you say nice things it really makes everything worthwhile. I try to answer all these personally but pressure of work sometimes means that it does not get done for some time ; this does not mean that I do not deeply appreciate all your letters.

I would also like to take this opportunity of thanking all those who were kind enough to send us Christmas cards and greetings. Many of them had no address attached so we regret that we have been unable to reply to them personally but we would like you to know how delighted we were that so many friends had thought of us.

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Katherine Dunham and Vanoye Aikens in Cake Walk. *This number which is the new finale of the show has had a sensational success. This one of the many new numbers to be seen in the performances by Katherine Dunham and her company now at the Cambridge Theatre (Photo: Duncan Melvin)*

Cover Stories

This month's cover, by Lipnitzki, is of Katherine Dunham in the last scene from her full-length ballet, *L'Ag'ya*. This ballet was one of the great hits when Dunham was in this country three years ago, and it will no doubt be repeated this time.

DUNHAM was born in Chicago in 1914. She studied dancing at an early age, and when she was at the University of Chicago she held classes in order to make a little extra money. While there she gained Ph.B. and M.A. She also received two Rosenwald Travel Fellowships and a Rockefeller Fellowship. She established her first school in Chicago in 1931. In 1933 she took part in the Martinique Ballet organised by Ruth Page. Owing to the Rosenwald Travel Fellowships, she was able to spend the years 1937-8 in the Caribbean Islands where she obtained most of the material she now uses in her productions. She was awarded her M.A. for her studies of the dances of Haiti. In 1939 she became dance director of *Pins and Needles*, a revue produced by New York's Labor Stage. The following year saw a concert recital at the Windsor Theatre. The success of this led to her receiving many offers. She gave more recitals and choreographed *Cabin in the Sky* in which she also appeared as Georgia Brown. This was followed by the revues, *Carib Song*, *Bal Nègre* and *Caribbean Rhapsody*, in which she translated the result of her research into terms of the theatre. She also choreographed many films. In recent years she has toured her company of dancers, singers and musicians, all over the world. Everywhere they have met with enormous success. It can be said that she, probably more than anyone, has done great work in creating an understanding of Negro art. She is married to John Pratt who designs the costumes and scenery for her productions.

The back cover, by Lido, is of Milorad Miskovitch who is now appearing with Janine Charrat's group of dancers, at present touring Europe and likely to come to England in the summer.

MISKOVITCH is a Yugo-Slav who first came to England with the De Cuevas Company in 1947. He later joined Roland Petit's Ballet de Paris and danced with the company during their season at Princes Theatre. He has danced as guest artist with Festival Ballet (Stoll Theatre, 1951) and also at the Florence Festival and in the works of Aurel Miloss.

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A great theatre comes of age

Since its reconstruction twenty-one years ago, Sadler's Wells Theatre has become famous in every corner of the globe. This has mainly come about owing to its association with a great ballet company. Several hundred years before the advent of the Sadler's Wells Ballet, the theatre had an honourable, if somewhat stormy, history.

by CLIVE BARNES

On January 6, Sadler's Wells, London's oldest theatre is twenty-one years old. This paradoxically venerable stripling has had a strange and chequered career. The latest manifestation of the phoenix arose from its ashes in 1931, yet it can claim from its history to be the oldest theatre in London which still preserves something of its original structure. This article, which is about the theatre not the Sadler's Wells Ballet, is intended as a passing tribute to this anniversary.

TO what strange chances do some people owe their immortality. The Mr. Sadler, a Clerkenwell highway surveyor whose name is now embalmed in the history of our lyric theatre, could scarcely have guessed his destiny when, one day in 1683, he rediscovered a mineral spring, well-known in medieval times, in the small village of Islington. It was probably more the hope of financial benefit than fame which spurred him to exploit the health-giving properties of his new-found wells. Mr. Sadler built an ornamental garden on the site of his discovery.

Later in company with a dancing-master named Forcer he built, as an additional attraction, a Musick House, where they promoted performances by singers, acrobats and tumblers. Thus at the beginning of the Wells' tradition we find singers and dancers—" the longer the world revolves, the less movement we will find on it."

Immediately before the beginning of the eighteenth century the theatre changed hands and was henceforth known as Mile's Musick House. This period of the establishment's history must be regarded as one of the many blots on the theatre's escutcheon. Not only were exhibitions of a somewhat questionable nature presented (at one, for example, a man ate a live hen, and later a luridly dramatised version of Hogarth's *Harlot's Progress* was presented) but it soon became a favourite resort for " roaring-boys and conny-catchers," who were the " wide-boys " of the period.

In 1712, following the murder of a naval lieutenant in the theatre, the house was closed by the authorities. Six years later it was re-opened and soon re-attained its disreputable position in the city's cultural life, and in 1744 it was decreed by the Grand Jury of Middlesex to be a place injurious to public morals. In many ways these years were not a very glorious beginning for a National Theatre.

Around the middle of the century the theatre passed to a builder called Rosoman, whose name to-day marks a street just by Finsbury Town Hall. In 1765, although medicinal waters had passed out of fashion, Mr. Rosoman found it worth his while to knock down the wooden structure and to re-build the theatre in brick. At this time the patrons' entrance money included the right to a pint of port or punch. The years to the end of the century saw the Wells occupied by not only an outstanding acrobat called Maddox, but also by a troupe of performing dogs.

Home of Grimaldi

The first great artist to appear at the Wells was Joe Grimaldi. It was here that he made his sensational debut as a child. When playing the part of a monkey on a chain, he was inadvertantly swung by his father over into the auditorium. The chain broke and the infant clown was thrown among the audience.

It was Grimaldi who was responsible for the theatre's first important contribution to theatrical history. One night in April 1800 Grimaldi, appearing in an entertainment called *Peter Wilkins* (based on Paltock's old novel I wonder ?), first adopted the white make-up with red half-moons on the cheeks now characteristic of a clown. Grimaldi was associated with the theatre for nearly fifty years ; one day perhaps the Wells might care to pay tribute to their illustrious predecessor in a ballet.

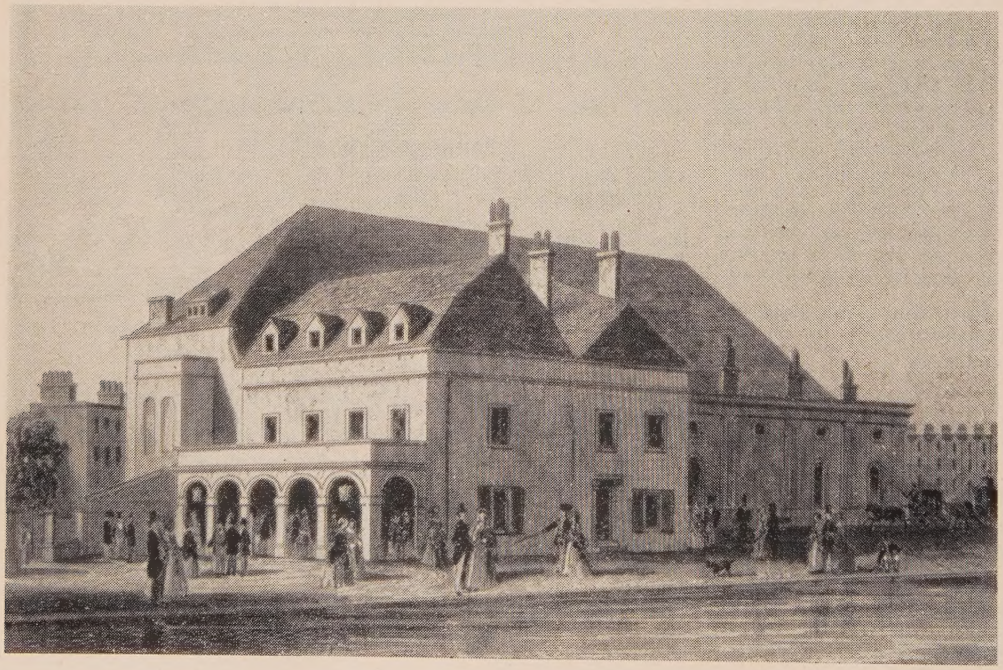
Dibden's aquatic spectacles

During the Napoleonic Wars Charles Dibden (known now as the composer of the song *Tom Bowling* and many ballad-operas) transformed the building by the ingenious use of underground water-tanks, into an aquatic theatre. Here were staged spectacles like *The Siege of Gibralta* with real ships and real water, in a way that would doubtless have made Hollywood go green with envy. In 1807, during the early years of this management, a false fire-alarm raised during a performance unfortunately resulted in the death of twenty-three people. Theatre-going had far more risks than merely dying of boredom in those days.

Neptune to Bacchus

After Dibden's death in 1814 his family attempted to keep the aquatic theatre going but failed. During the twenties the house became well-known for melodrama, occasionally rising to the histrionic peak of a dramatised Scott novel.

In 1828 Grimaldi gave his " Farewell " to the Wells, and three months later he quitted the stage forever. The theatre was now owned by the London Wine Company, and presumably the audiences forgot the simple pleasures of Dibden's water in their quest for stronger entertainment—the sway of Neptune gave place to the more persuasive rule of Bacchus.



The Sadler's Wells Theatre in 1851. *This print shows the theatre at one of the most glorious periods in its history.*

Samuel Phelps took over the disreputable theatre and for eighteen years it was the home of English classics which were given with beauty and taste hitherto unknown. The fight put up by Phelps to restore order to the theatre is one of the most courageous chapters in English theatrical history.

It was no easy task to persuade an audience, used to more riotous entertainment, that they could equally enjoy Shakespeare, Otway, or Massinger. But this he managed to do and what is more his reign attracted an audience from other parts of London in the same way that a ballet company did almost a century later.

How unpredictable is theatrical history! Who could tell that this disreputable slum-house was about to pass into a period of such prosperity that Macqueen Pope could say of it, "Artistically the Wells was probably the foremost London theatre of its time."

In 1843 the Theatre Regulation Act was passed by Parliament. This reform conferred on all theatres in the country those privileges which had previously been enjoyed by only the two or three so-called "patent" theatres in the West-End. In practice it opened up free-trade in the legitimate theatre. A year after this Act Samuel Phelps took over management of the Wells.

Glorious reign

The reign of Phelps was glorious and revolutionary. Ignoring the theatre's past history, with courage and foresight he made it a home for the Elizabethan drama. As may be imagined he met with immense opposition. He opened on May 27, 1844, with *Macbeth* and for two years after this struggled with an audience that clamourously demanded a return to the days of beer and skittles.

The behaviour of audiences in those days is past imagination. When it is remembered that only three years before Phelp's experiment Macready had been actually attacked in the Press for attempting to forbid "women of the town" from the two circles at Drury Lane, it will be seen that Phelp's task in cleaning up the Wells was not easy. He ruled that on the slightest disturbance the offender was to be thrown out, and frequently would go up to the gallery, in full stage dress, to enforce order personally.

Home of classics

By 1846 Phelps had won his battle and in later years Henry Morley was able to write of the audience, "If the crowd at Drury Lane is a gross discredit to the public taste, the crowd at Sadler's Wells more than neutralises any ill opinions that may on that score be formed of playgoers."

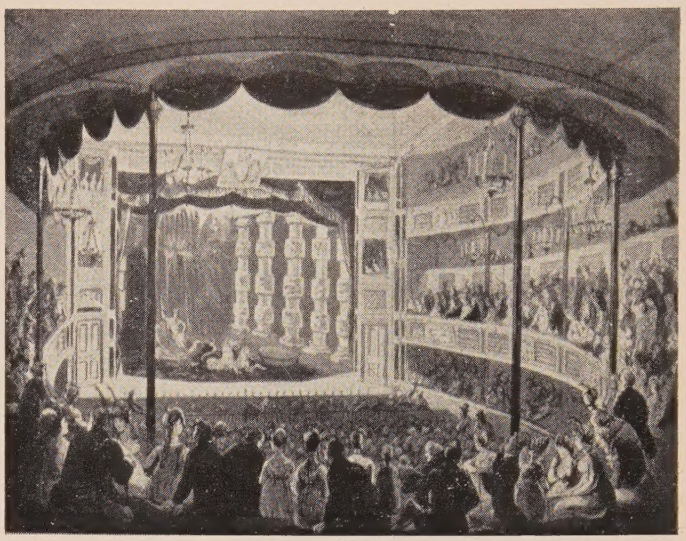
Phelps held the Wells until 1862. Phelps himself appears to have been a very fine actor rather than a great one. His style was apparently too much modelled on Macready's to be personal to himself, and it is said that he lacked poetry in his declamation.

The splendour of his management rested chiefly on his unequalled standards of production, the team-work of his excellent casts, and the adventurous variety of his repertory. Not only did he produce all Shakespeare's plays bar three, but he also revived five Beaumont and Fletchers, three Massingers, and plays by Rowley, Webster, Otway, Vanburgh, Cibber, Goldsmith—the list is almost unending. It represents the greatest achievement in the Wells' long history.

After Phelps, the deluge

As one historian writing of this period puts it, the theatre "was nightly filled with an eager and rapt audience, most of them fresh from the workshop and counter, drinking in immortal ideas, of which but for the stage they would have lived and died in ignorance." It is interesting in view of the Wells' present position to recall Morley once more. "The scenery is very beautiful, but wholly free from the meretricious glitter now in favour; it is not so remarkable for its costliness as for the pure taste in which it and all the stage-arrangements have been planned".

The deluge that followed Phelps started as little more than a trickle but ended in a cascade that was to swoop the Wells once more down to the rock-bottom of artistic enterprise. At first some small attempt to maintain the standards was made but it failed. The house degenerated—it was used as a skating-rink; it was used as a boxing arena; it was closed as dangerous.



The interior of Sadler's Wells Theatre in 1775. *The scene is from the pantomime,* Harlequin Neptune. *The New River was used for this aqua-spectacle.*

After a storm, Tritons and Sea Nymphs heralded the approach of Neptune (in a naval car drawn by two white horses) who threw off his cloak and was revealed as Harlequin.

(The engraving is from Pyne's Microcosm of London).

Twice-nightly variety

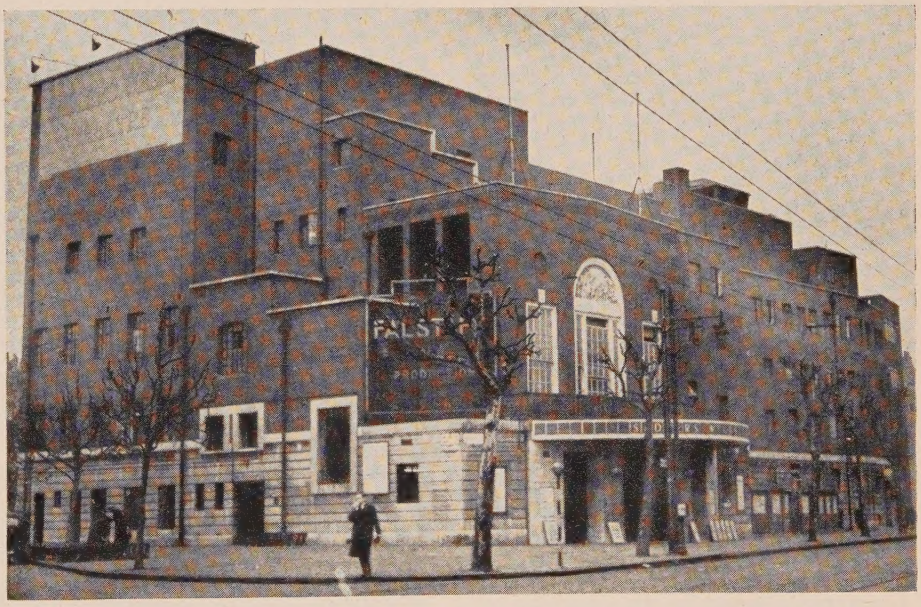
In 1879 Kate Bateman, a noted actress, made a gallant attempt to save the Wells. She reconstructed the interior and opened with a fairly good company. Luck was against her and the tastes of audiences had changed. Two years later she died, and the theatre became a twice-nightly variety house. With fits and starts it continued in this guise and in 1900 Marie Lloyd appeared there.

However this spasmodic career of closures and re-openings did not last long. The theatre had a very bad reputation and few people were surprised or sorry when at the beginning of the present century it was left derelict. A dead and forgotten theatre, with an often riotous and sometimes glorious past. In 1921 a Mr. Rolls thought of re-opening it as a music-hall. Luckily he changed his mind.

Old Vic of North London

The full story of the Vic-Wells organisation is naturally more concerned with the Vic than with the Wells. By 1929 the early period of Emma Cons and her coffee was finished, the period of Lillian Baylis and her coffers was in full swing, and, as ever, the coffers were empty. Nevertheless it was decided to expand. The Vic economically and artistically needed to grow. The opera company needed a firmer basis and a more regular constitution. After much thought it was decided to open "an Old Vic for North London". The derelict Wells was an obvious choice.

How the theatre again rose to an importance it never knew, even in the days of Phelps, will be told in the concluding article in our February issue.



The Sadler's Wells Theatre as it is to-day. The present building was re-opened on January 6, 1931. *Though completely re-built it retained some of Rosoman's old structure.*

(Photo: John Vickers)

A YOUNG DANCER WRITES HOME

The letters of Donald Britton, a principal male dancer now touring Canada and the U.S.A. with the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, to his parents in Bristol.

BALLET history is more than a clip of press-cuttings, a bundle of old photographs, and the half-remembered reminiscences of aged balletomanes. Left with nothing but these somewhat impersonal reminders the period of the Romantic Ballet, for example, would fail to come to life; would lack that pre-requisite of Dr. Johnson's—human interest.

If the history of ballet does not lack this human interest it is because, supplementary to all the transitory burblings of critics and the erudite whisperings of scholars, we have personal documents—journals, diaries, letters, recorded snatches of conversation—left by the dancers themselves. Letters by Blasis, letters by Grisi, an autobiography by Karsavina; all first-hand statements recorded by the makers, rather than the observers, of ballet history.

The present letters we are publishing in DANCE AND DANCERS do not possess the venerable patina bestowed by antiquity. They concern the contemporaneous tour of North America undertaken by the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet. However we feel they have an interest which not only will increase with the years, but which even now presents a more faithful picture of life in a modern touring ballet company, than would be possible from a factual account by a professional commentator.

The letters are by Donald Britton, a principal dancer with the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, and were written to his parents in Gloucestershire. The Editor would like to take this opportunity of expressing his debt to Mr. and Mrs. P. W. Britton, for placing this material at his disposal.

The company left Euston Station on September 25. They travelled by train to Liverpool and there embarked on the Canadian Pacific liner, *S.S. Empress of France*. Donald Britton's first letters concern life on board.

S.S.EMPRESS OF FRANCE

29 SEPT., 1951

AT the moment we have a wind hitting the Port side, giving us a roll side and up and down, rather a nice sensation but not practical for the people who feel ill—which is a good half.

Yesterday we sighted a school of porpoises and sea-gulls, but still no sign of land.

The food is fabulous. I've never eaten as much as I do now . . . Probably we will sight Bell Island (wherever that is) at midnight. I only hope it clears up a bit before then as you nearly get blown off the deck.

The trip was anything but smooth and about half the company apparently went down with sea-sickness.

HERMIONE (Harvey) has done very well for herself, being one of the four girls to survive the trip, and I'm one of the five boys. Michel Hogan has not done very well at all, being in bed for three days, but Maurice (Metliss) and I go on for ever.

But as a compensation for this there was the food (for those fit to take it) and the games.

FOR entertainments we have the movies, Bingo, deck tennis and pontoon. The latter is played mostly by us.

The ship docked on Monday, October 1.

Donald Britton (whose letters are published here) with Elaine Fifield and Maryon Lane in Ashton's Valses Nobles et Sentimentales *to Ravel music.*
This work originally created for the Rambert Ballet under the title of St. Valentine's Eve *was revived a few years ago for Sadler's Wells when the title was changed to the same as the music. The Sophie Fedorovitch costumes and decor were retained.*
(*Photo: Angus McBean*)

CHATEAU FRONTENAC, QUEBEC

1 OCT., 1951

WE arrived in about five o' clock and did not disembark because we had tea laid on before leaving. After this the Press took our photos in the ship's lounge, we then proceeded down the gang-plank to the custom sheds.

We were then taken to the hotel in diesel trucks. Now everything's wonderful; the boat sirens are hooting and American cars are dashing around outside, although it takes time for the noise to register as we are fifteen floors up!

I have just come back from a walk round the old city, Quebec, and boy! what a place! Drug stores everywhere, with signs and lights in shops flashing on and off.

Clothes and watches are very expensive here, in fact a good deal is expensive, especially when you have only ten dollars for two days.

Tomorrow we start working, what a thought! Oh well we're not here for a holiday—worst luck.

The Company opened at the Capitol Theatre, Quebec on Friday, October 5 with *Coppelia*. After three performances they proceeded to Ottawa.

CHATEAU LAURIER, OTTAWA

7 Oct., 1951

I'VE not had any mail yet, so I do hope that you have been receiving mine.

The performances had a very cool reception in Quebec, but I am told that that was to be expected. Apparently when Pavlova played there she did only three nights and then flopped.

On the Friday we did Coppelia *with Fifield and Blair. I did the Betrothal Dance with O'Reilly. But the company did not feel excited as the audience were so cool.*

Saturday we did Casse, Ballroom *and* Poll *for the Matinee. You will never believe that an audience could refrain from laughing at* Poll, *but THEY DID.*

In the evening I did the Lac—pas de trois, *followed by* Khadra, Rendezvous *and* Prospect. *We were pretty glad to leave Quebec.*

In another letter of the same date Britton describes the departure from Quebec.

FROM the performance we were rushed in a bus down to the station. You should have seen us rushing to and fro, with scenery and skips. I thought we would never get out of the theatre.

Arriving at the station we all checked our sleepers and luggage and went across the road to grab some supper. This was at about one in the morning. We managed to find a Chinese restaurant, which to our amazement had a juke-box—our first of the tour. We fed well on pork chops, chips, apple-pie, coffee, rolls and butter, and got back to the train.

This morning we were up at seven to be washed and ready to change at Montreal at 7.35. *Funnily enough it looks just like an English day with a miserable wet atmosphere.*

After a couple of performances (matinee and evening) in Ottawa, they moved on for a four day stay in Montreal.

THE LAURENTIAN, MONTREAL

12 OCT., 1951

MOST of the company are very annoyed at not receiving any mail, I can't think what's happened to it.

Apparently we are the best thing Montreal has ever seen. We've had wonderful houses and do they make a fuss of us! Everything is just wonderful.

Thursday morning Maryon Lane, Peggy (Van Praag—the company's ballet mistress) *and myself gave a class for the Montreal Girls School. When we finished the class we did the* Giselle—pas de deux, *which brought the house down. We made our exit through a court-yard which was surrounded by the blocks of the school. This was absolutely full with girls shouting, "We want Don!" Most embarassing.*

It was not bobbysoxers all the way for the company however, and already illness was taking a certain toll.

THE company is not faring too well as there is gastric 'flu about and three members are down with it. Blair is off now, with a sore heel and gastric 'flu, so the work is piling up on Pirmin (Trecu) *and I.*

After Montreal (where they added *Harlequin in April* and *Beauty and the Beast* to the Quebec repertory) they proceeded to Toronto. Here their visit clashed with the Royal Tour.

THE BARCLAY, TORONTO

14 OCT., 1951

AGAIN another town, but it seems very quiet compared with Montreal. We have called it the Canadian Manchester.

Today we had the whole day off, so we went to the Niagara Falls. They are something really worth seeing, but are a little spoilt by the buildings round them. Shops selling souvenirs and, of course, drug-stores.

The company played a complete week in Toronto (where *Pastorale* and *Rendezvous* were added to the repertory) and then moved out of Canada and crossed the border.

THE SHERATON HOTEL, ROCHESTER

25 OCT., 1951

WORK is steadily piling up on us as some of the kids are off. Blair still has his heel trouble, Michel (Hogan) *and O'Reilly have sprained ankles. Another girl is off with a bruised heel and Sheila Nelson has a poisoned hand. However we are steadily making great headway in the fame of Sadler's Wells.*

As for enjoyment, well you could not wish for more as far as parties are concerned. In fact if you could stand the pace you could go to three parties a night!

Towns are beginning to look alike now; just a hotel-bed, theatre and drug-store.

At Cleveland the company did their first one-night stand.

EN ROUTE

27 OCT., 1951

WELL, after travelling all night by train we finally arrived here (Cleveland) at 7.30 a.m.

The company looks really tired after all this moving around. On these one-night stands the four of us get a single room and sleep all day, while the rest of the company sleep anywhere they can in the theatre.

Detroit tonight and a hotel for two days.

The company had three days in Detroit, then on to East Lansing, Michigan.

MICHIGAN STATE COLLEGE, EAST LANSING

1 Nov., 1951

THE performances in Rochester looked very tired as the majority of the company, had slept on skips or in the stalls of the theatre.

Performances were improving in Detroit as everyone caught up with their sleep.

As you see we are now in East Lansing in the best hotel of the tour so far. It has only been open six weeks and is very modern.

Actually this place is a college, in which there is also the theatre. It's really like a big Cambridge. Last night was Hallow'een and the college invited us to a party.

PERSONALITIES OF THE MONTH

Leonide Massine

CREATING a ballet in London—reviving another in Milan or Paris—dancing in America—that is the life of Massine today. All this at an age when many people are choosing slippers to spend comfortable retirement by the fireside. His latest work, *Donald of the Burthens*, showed that even now he has not exhausted his sources for character ballets.

Born in Moscow in 1896, he studied at the Imperial School. His first creation, *Soleil de Nuit*, was given in 1915 and from then on he has created some of the finest works of this century. Many of his works have been influenced by modern movements in art, others derived their inspiration from symphonies (notably Berlioz' *Symphonie Fantastique*); his most important contribution has probably been his character ballets.

As a dancer he has created many roles mainly in his own ballets. His presence adds distinction to everything he does owing to his great sense of style and characterisation. Even today his magnetism remains.

Leonide Massine (*Photo: Angus McBean*)

The secret of his apparently eternal youth lies in his rigid self-discipline. At an hour in the morning when most people are only thinking about getting up, he is to be seen working at the *barre*. His day is planned almost to the minute—so many hours for rehearsal, so many for rest, so many for actual performance. In his time he has earned a great deal of money, no dancer or choreographer more fully deserved it.

Belinda Wright

A YEAR in the sun of Hollywood with nothing much to do would be the ruin of most dancers with not many years to their credit. Belinda Wright returned, from her abortive months of waiting for Ballet de Paris to make the film of *Carmen*, with an added quality. Her recent performances with Festival Ballet revealed her as that almost unknown person in England—the perfect *soubrette*.

Born near Manchester, she went to the Rambert School at an early age. Graduating to the company she started to be noticed before the company toured Australia in 1947. On her return to England the following year, she joined Roland Petit's Ballet de Paris and took over many important roles notably Agathe in *Les Demoiselles de la nuit*. Since joining Festival Ballet she has danced The Young Girl in *Spectre de la Rose*, Odette in *Swan Lake*, The Street Dancer in *Beau Danube*, also Columbine in *Harlequinade*.

She has great *chic* on the stage, everything she does is neat and well finished and she has a beautiful line. At the moment she is piquant rather than lyrical. This quality should make her the ideal Swanilda in *Coppelia*.

LANCE TREDWELL

ANTON DOLIN'S PAGE

Owing to his visit to the United States and the many delays, caused by the weather, in his return, Anton Dolin was not able to finish his article. He will resume his monthly page in the February issue.

Belinda Wright (*Photo: Roy Dixon*)

Edward Noll. (*Photo: Maurice Seymour*)

Two moccasins to forty-eight taps

The story of how a boy from St. Louis, Missouri, came to control twenty-four pairs of legs in Leicester Square, London

by
PETER WILLIAMS

IT is a curious fact that those who start life with an urge for the theatre frequently finish in the theatre—somewhere. Those high-minded babies who spend their early years burning-up with desire to become engine drivers, shop keepers or doctors, end up differently as a rule. It is this continual change of heart that makes life exhilarating. Then there are those who never have any intention of doing anything other than loaf around until they amble into their graves—and that must be fun too.

Eddie Noll was doomed from the start. Not that his family had anything to do with the theatre but "I just had to dance," he says, and that was that ! Of course many others have said the same thing and they seldom get any further than a few turns with a girl friend at the local Palais on a Saturday night. But Eddie looks as though he always meant business.

He is lean and wiry with the kind of delicate look that is so deceptive in Americans. They look as though a zephyr would blow them in little pieces and then they emerge from a violent battle with medals hung around them like a non-utility Christmas tree.

Overture St. Louis

At the age of six Eddie was up on his points in beaded moccasin slippers. In the basement of his St. Louis home he had rigged up a theatre. Sometimes he performed for himself, sometimes his family ; sometimes the neighbouring children would witness these one-boy shows, sometimes they had to pay.

He went to the theatre at an early age because his mother loved it. Together they would see all the companies that visited St. Louis. On one of these occasions it was Gertrude Hoffman and her troupe and this may possibly have given him the germ of an idea for the work he is now doing—on the other hand it may not.

As he *had* to dance he became a Robert Alton student and there he learnt to dance together with Mitzi Mayfair (remember her in the original Dorchester follies ?) and Betty (legs) Grable. It seems that St. Louis has had quite a lot to answer for.

The Noll family then moved to Detroit. Not because Eddie was making the place too hot or anything but just because, well, they wanted to move. In the city of Ford cars, he continued to study and also appeared in revues.

Chicago to Rio

At the age of fifteen he took a vacation to Chicago but the vacation ended up in so much work. He got into a flash act and toured the Middle West.

He worked in cabarets and hotels with, and without, a partner. Eventually he fetched-up in Rio. The choreographer at the Casino had too much work on his hands so he passed some of it over to Eddie. This was his first attempt at choreographing anything other than his own numbers.

By this time America had entered the war so he went into the Signal Corps. Following the almost traditional occupation of American dancers, he also dug ditches.

After a nervous breakdown he returned to Chicago. Merriel Abbot auditioned a short number of his for the girls, to *Holidays for strings*, and Eddie was engaged at The Palmer House for two years.

Football stadium and fashion choreography

With Marion Nolan he danced in cabarets the act being called Noll and Nolan. When the name started to drive them crazy, they changed it to Scott and Suzanne for reasons never made quite clear.

Moving on to New York he choreographed the musical *Angel in the wings* and a revival of Jerome Kern's *Sally*. An engagement with the Pittsburg Civic Light Opera Company caused him to create a large number of dances in a football stadium.

The work he had to do was varied and ranged from *Bloomer Girl* to old stand-bys like *Show Boat* and *Hit the deck*. It was in the military tap number for the West Point cadets from *Rosalie* that he got nearest to the routines that have since made him world famous.

Back in New York he became involved in a big fashion show organised by the *New York Times*. This was one of the first shows to display garments in the form of a revue. It also brought him into contact with the producer, the same one with whom he now works—Nat Karson. Together they set sail for England when Metro Goldwyn Mayer decided to repeat the policy of their Radio City Music Hall by giving, at the Empire Cinema, London, a full-length stage show with the film.

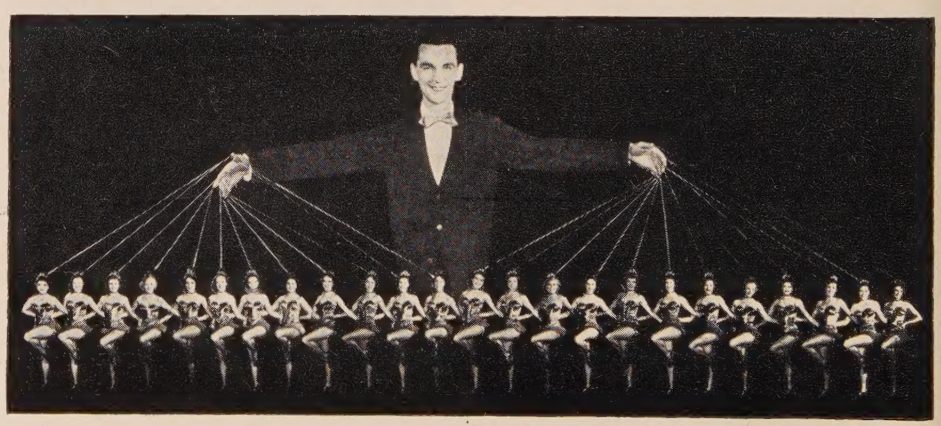
Hello ! Leicester Square

It was on Boxing Day, 1949, that this double form of entertainment was first seen at the Empire. Now, after two years, it can generally be considered to be a great success. This has mainly been due to the producer, Nat Karson, and also the Precision Girls.

Twenty-four gorgeous spangled hoofers kicking and tapping in perfect unison are all very well, but if what they do lacks imagination—then it becomes a bore. That they have become the pride of Leicester Square is entirely due to Eddie. Whether they are Charleston Cuties or Bathing Beauties, they enter into the spirit of it with disciplined enjoyment.

Every three weeks, Eddie has to work up new routines for them. He gets the music and works out the numbers on himself. Then he makes diagrams to get the formations. At the first rehearsal with the girls he polishes-up and develops characterisation. This is followed by hours of gruelling rehearsal that can only take place between the shows. Apart from the single Sunday dress rehearsal, he can never see the effect on the stage until the first public performance.

That the girls come up with two entirely different numbers in each show is extraordinary, that their every number is fresh and full of invention is—well, there must be something in that St. Louis air.



Eddie holds the strings that control the Empire Girls. (*Photo: Rimis*)

Dancers and Acrobats

by JOHN PERCIVAL

Is the use of acrobatics detrimental to ballet ? This question is frequently cropping up and in this article John Percival attempts to clarify the difference between the wrong and right use of acrobatics in choreography and dancing.

ONE of the most surprising moments in that surprising ballet *Tiresias* came near the beginning when Rowena Jackson (in a passage which has since been revised) stepped to the centre of the stage and performed a series of cartwheels without touching her hands to the ground.

Although the lengthy programme notes had made it clear that the first scene opened with young girls in a gymnasium, it was disconcerting to find the choreography so literally gymnastic in the case of this one performer only, and to be reminded so strongly, at the beginning of an apparently serious work, of a well-known passage from Petit's *Les Forains*.

Such introduction of acrobat's tricks into ballet is nothing new, however. Balanchine's *Prodigal Son*, for instance, contains various examples, such as the forming of the Siren into a human hoop around the Prodigal's body, hanging without any support ; or her appearance from behind the up-ended table, perched high on a man's shoulders and thus dominating the scene of the robbery.

GUESS WHO?

Here is a dancer who is also an acrobat. Before reading any further, see if you can guess who she is. If you have no idea the answer will be found in the seventh line from the bottom of column two.

Engaged originally for an acrobatic role with Les Ballets des Champs Elysées, she has recently developed into an important dancer. Her presence has inspired choreographers to introduce acrobatics naturally into their works.

(*Photo : Lido*)

Diaghilev speaks out

Yet it was this ballet which prompted Diaghilev to write a provocative letter to *The Times* on the subject of acrobaticism and classicism " The coarsest acrobatic tricks," he declared, " are the toe-dancing, the double *tours en l'air*, next to the classical *pirouettes en dehors* and the hateful thirty-two *fouettes;* that is when acrobatics should be attacked. In the plastic efforts of Balanchine in *The Prodigal Son* there are far less acrobatics than in the final classical *pas de deux* of *Aurora's Wedding*."

It is obvious at once that the term acrobatics, although frequently employed in ballet criticism (and generally in an abusive sense) is actually a serious source of confusion because of the different meanings it can bear. Used either of dancing or of choreography, it is ambiguous.

In the former case, it may be applied loosely to any dancer whose style the writer happens not to like ; or else, more correctly, to one who deliberately stresses the difficulties of a particular dance in order to make the successful completion of it more impressive.

Almost all classical dancing quite properly involves an element of display, of " showing off " and triumphing over difficulties. To this extent Diaghilev was justified in calling the *Aurora pas de deux* more acrobatic than the dances of *The Prodigal Son*, which are not simply show-pieces but are concerned with the relating and pointing of a story in plastic form.

The acrobatic Joker

Used of choreography, the word " acrobatic " may imply either the introduction of real acrobat's tricks (such as those which add so much excitement to certain ballets by Roland Petit) or the invention of a new and difficult movements, often derived and adapted from standard academic steps. It is in this last sense that acrobatics can be most valuable, if they are used for heightened expressiveness or greater variety within the academic tradition.

Consider, for instance, Janine Charrat's *Jeu de Cartes*. This ballet has an outstanding solo role, that of the Joker which is particularly arduous but rewarding because of the opportunities for individual display and dominating characterisation which it gives.

The role derives its special quality from the combination of normal classical steps (leaps, beats and turns of all kinds) with the sudden falls, handsprings, and somersalts of an acrobat and also with some individual and specially invented movements ; these various elements being blended into a whole in order to suggest the capricious, adroit and mercurial nature of the Joker. A similar effect could have been achieved without acrobaticism but Charrat has presented an original and satisfactory creation of her own—which is something more worthwhile than even a good copy of another choreographer's manner.

Some of the other characters in *Jeu de Cartes* are given movements of a sufficiently acrobatic flavour to prevent the Joker's dances from jarring, but never enough to detract from his special and dominating nature. It is manifestly more difficult to set acrobatic steps for an ensemble of classically trained dancers than for one exceptionally gifted individual, and the most obvious examples of acrobaticism are of solo roles—The Third Sailor in Robbin's *Fancy Free*, some of the Deadly Sins in Staff's *Fanciulla delle Rose*, the Sphynx in Lichine's *La Rencontre*, or certain roles created for the French dancers Rodolph and Darmance.

Petit and Ashton

Both Petit and Ashton have employed acrobatic tricks in *pas de deux*. In *Le Bal des Blanchisseuses*, Petit seems to have tried to use Darmance's acrobatics not only for the sake of novelty but also to create an impression of charm and even of tenderness. In other words, he has sought to use an acrobatic technique in precisely the same way, and to exactly the same end, as a classical technique might have been employed. *Le Bal des Blanchisseuses* is not an important enough work to make much of a stir, but the attempt is significant, and in the River Scene from *Ballabile* there is a suggestion of a similar aim.

More interesting is the use of acrobatics in a *pas de deux* by Ashton, if only because he is a more established choreographer, and one more firmly in the classical tradition. The dance of the female Tiresias and her lover is a nother example of blending disparate elements into a whole, with the stylised love-making, acrobatics (such as the leap in which Tiresias literally throws herself at the head of her lover) and ordinary classical movements—these last made more difficult because the man must do much of his partnering from a kneeling position.

Need for Experiment

Two questions present themselves in an examination of dances and ballets such as these : why are they created, and are they worth creating ? To the first, only the choreographer can reply adequately but it seems not unreasonable for any creative artist to want to experiment in different forms and tech ı ques, especially as a reaction from previous work in another manner. The audience ,too, demands entertainment by which it can be affected in a positive manner.

It is the critic's task to decide the value of such acrobatic choreography ; it is dangerously easy to get perturbed about the duty of preserving the classical tradition, and to condemn anything outside this tradition as subversive. Such an attitude is as foolish in criticism as it is in politics.

Ballet owes its existence to the classical tradition, and classicism must be saved ; but it is only worth saving if it is sufficiently vital to absorb new developments and experiments. So by all means let choreographers bring on the acrobats and let us enjoy anything that is sufficiently well done to be worth doing. If the true ballet tradition is as strong as I believe it to be, no real harm is done ; and if not, then only good will come of anything unusual enough to provoke some response and reaction.

Music

by EVAN SENIOR

Graced with Elegancy

The English Masque was one of the first forms of ballet. Its revival may well be the start of a new life for this kind of entertainment.

I CAME home from the Mercury Theatre, after Ballet Workshop's production of the Masque, *Venus and the Bridegroom*, to read again one of the most delightful and informative pieces of theatrical criticism ever written.

It is Bacon's essay, *Of Masques and Triumphs;* and in opening it, three and a half centuries ago, he wrote something which could well apply today to this compression on to a small stage of an art-form which later became over-done and too elaborate:

"These things are but toys to come amongst such serious observations. But yet, since princes will have such things, it is better they should be graced with elegancy than daubed with cost".

Perhaps David Ellis read those words before he produced the delightful Ashley Dukes work, and perhaps Michael Hobson read them before he wrote his charming little score. For "graced with elegancy" the performance certainly was.

This combination called the Masque, of music, dancing, acting, stage-setting, singing, and pageantry, was the parent of much of our entertainment of the theatre, reaching the height of its development in all countries of western Europe in the sixteenth century. From it grew opera in Italy, ballet in France, and drama in England. And in Britain, much of our finest musical heritage is from the Masque, in the works of such composers as Christopher Gibbons and John Blow, Purcell, and, later, Arne. It was, of course, from Arne's Masque, *Alfred*, that our *Rule, Britannia* derives.

But whereas ballet today is a fusion of its component arts on equal terms, the Masque had far too many ingredients to be able to achieve unity except through its one binding force, its music. The music was the dominating factor and still is; for although we have lost almost all of the great Masques except for a few outstanding examples, the music has survived in its own right, and can be and is still played.

The same thing holds good today, for it is Michael Hobson's music which is the dominant factor in this new and delightful little Masque which Ballet Workshop has made one of its finest achievements.

This young composer, whose work I have referred to many times in this column, has taken the many elements of Masque and has provided them with a co-ordination which has a musical value of its own apart from its immediate uses.

Bacon went on to say, among other things: "But chiefly, let the music of them be recreative, and with some strange changes". That is music criticism which might well be of today. For by "recreative", Bacon surely meant the word to be read in its meaning of his time—nothing to do with "recreation" as we understand it, but rather "re-creation": re-creating in the mind of the listener the atmosphere intended to be conveyed by the work.

Hobson's music has done that; it has re-created the old and lovely form, and has given it background and foundation, "graced with elegancy" in sound. And as to Bacon's "strange changes", there is a phrase wherein modern ideas of harmony could well find a convenient resting place, or a justification if any were needed.

Ballet Workshop is experimental. It may well, in the years to come, make many mistakes and doubtless it will. But these will be worthwhile if, occasionally, it produces a success or even a promise. And in finding Michael Hobson as a promising composer it has done enough already to justify any number of mistakes in the future.

New Records

Casse-Noisette (Tschaikowsky), Op. 71a. Philharmonia Orchestra, conducted by Igor Markevitch. H.M.V. C.7885-7. 3 12-in., 6*s.* 10*d.* each.

The issuing of yet another set of records of Casse-Noisette would, in ordinary circumstances, be no news at all. We have had them until we could almost be sick of hearing the same recorded tunes over and over again.

But for ballet-lovers this particular set is different, for it contains one of the best performances I have heard of the much-desired *Pas de deux*.

Michael Hobson

Usually the suite we hear recorded is that made for concert performance by Tschaikowsky himself, Op. 71, leaving out this particular number. For ordinary concert performance the *Pas de deux* has little significance. It is so much "ballet" in itself that it could well, in the concert hall, be slightly disturbing.

It has been recorded before, but on long-playing, for which not all ballet-lovers are equipped. Now we have, for playing at ordinary speed, a performance of it which is well worth the wait.

This particular music, perhaps more than anything else that Tschaikowsky wrote, is essentially of the ballet, and absolutely apt for its purpose. It is a grand, noble, sweeping melody, perhaps repeated *ad nauseam*, but so perfectly expressing in music the atmosphere, which only goes to show what a composer of genius can do with a tune that is nothing but a simple descending scale. Its breadth of phrasing matches exactly everything that we expect from the climax of great dancing.

This is a magnificent performance, all the way through. A fine orchestra which senses the meaning of the music is conducted by a musician who feels it all as ballet.

On the first disc the *Overture Miniature* and the *March* share the first side, coupled with the *Dance of the Sugar-Plum Fairy* and the *Trepak*; the second has the Arab Dance and the Chinese Dance coupled with a reverse completely devoted to the *Pas de deux*; the third record has the *Danse des Mirlitons* (Dance of the Flutes) and the Waltz of the Flowers, which carries over on to the last side.

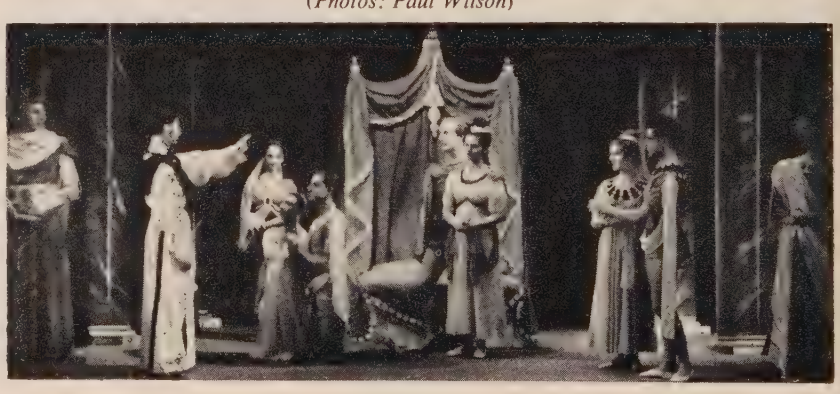
If you already have all that you want of the *Casse-Noisette* suite played as you like it, you could buy record C.7887 and put up with another performance of the Arab and Chinese dances for the sake of this majestic performance of the *Pas de deux*.

VENUS AND THE BRIDEGROOM

The Masque by Ashley Dukes had its first performance by Ballet Workshop on November 11, 1951. The music was by Michael Hobson, decor and costumes by Hugh Stevenson, choreography by David Ellis.

The photograph below shows a Priest (Michael Holmes) blessing the married couple (Anne Lascelles and Kenneth Smith). Owing to the carelessness of the bridegroom, who leaves the wedding ring on the finger of a recumbent Venus (Lelia Russell), the wedding night is disturbed by the continual appearance of the goddess (photo left).

(*Photos: Paul Wilson*)



Sonia Arova as Azucena in the gypsy camp (*Photo: Duncan Melvin*)

New Ballets

REVANCHE

First given by Les Ballets des Champs-Elysées at Le Théatre de L'Empire, Paris, in October, 1951. Ballet by Ruth Page based on Verdi's *Il Trovatore* with the collaboration of Nicholas Remisoff. Verdi's music arranged by Issac Van Grove. Decors and costumes by Clavé. Choreography by Ruth Page.

CAST

Prologue—The Courtyard of the Castle

Azucena, a young girl	Sonia Arova
Her Mother	Nicole Morice
Count di Luna, at six years old	Alexandra Richer
His Father	Antonio Pardina
The Nurse	Marie-Rose Millon

SCENE 1. The Castle, twenty years later
SCENE 2. The Gypsy Encampment
SCENE 3. In front of the prison
SCENE 4. The Betrothal

Léonara	Jacqueline Moreau
Azucena	Sonia Arova
Manrico	Vladimir Skouratoff
Count di Luna	Gerard Ohn
Inez	Gayle Spear
The Jester	Deryk Mendel

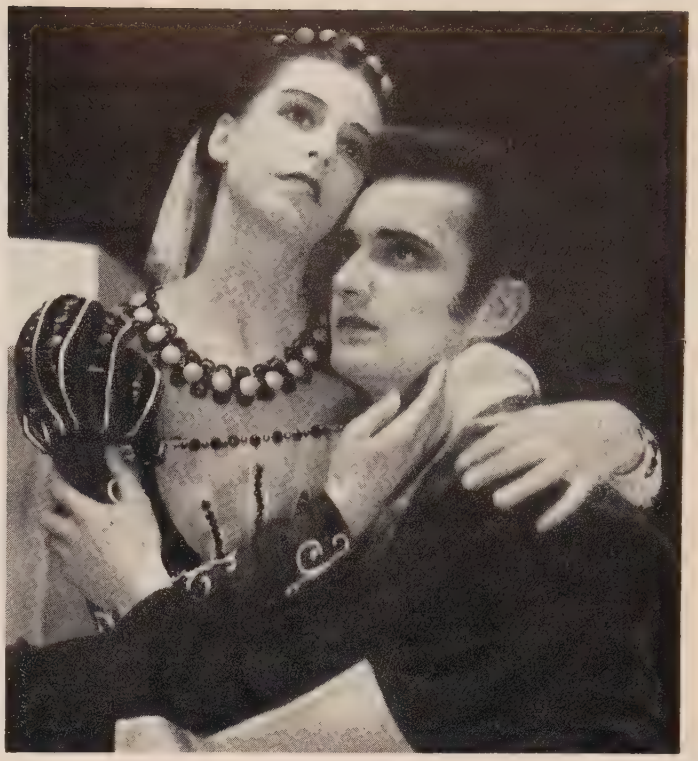
Court Ladies : Soldiers : Gypsies :

The ballet, closely following the opera, is about dark and violent passions in mediaeval Spain. The Young Gypsy girl, Azucena, steals the infant son of the Count di Luna so as to revenge the death of her mother. She brings him up as her son giving him the name of Manrico.

Twenty years later, Manrico becomes involved in a duel with the present Count di Luna. They both love Léonara but they are quite unaware of the fact that they are brothers. Manrico and Léonara escape to a gypsy encampment where di Luna finds them. In the fight which follows, Manrico is held back from killing his brother by a supernatural power. Azucena thinks only of revenge.

When Manrico and Azucena are thrown into prison by the Count they are shown no mercy. In order to save the life of her beloved, Léonara agrees to marry the Count in exchange for Manrico's liberty.

The principal characters in front of Clave's drop-curtain
(*Photo: Duncan Melvin*)



Jacqueline Moreau as Léonara, and Vladimir Skouratoff as Manrico
(*Photo: Duncan Melvin*)

So that the marriage will never be consummated, Leonara takes poison. To revenge her death, di Luna kills Manrico. The moment he dies, Azucena reveals his true identity to the Count by showing him the family medal which he wore round his neck. Vengeance is complete.

OPERA is one art of the theatre, ballet is another. It is not true to say that never the twain shall meet because there have been several examples of a successful union—Fokine's *Coq d'Or*, Balanchine's *Night Shadow*, and Roland Petit's *Carmen*. But it must be remembered that the opera composer has only one element to contend with, other than the music—the human voice. This obviously results in long passages that are completely unsuitable for translation into terms of ballet.

Ruth Page has kept so close to the opera that it neither makes good opera nor, when analysed, particularly good ballet. But if all this is forgotten, it amounts to very good entertainment in the theatre. The Clavé designs were wonderful and he has proved again that he is one of the most important ballet designers of today. Sonia Arova gave the performance of her career as Azucena and she was well supported by Skouratoff and Ohn. Moreau was rather disappointing as the unhappy young girl.

P. W.

Liane Daydé as Snow-White, and Nicholas Efimoff as an Old Dwarf. (*Photo: Lido*)

BLANCHE-NEIGE (Snow White)

Ballet in three acts and six scenes based on the fairy tale by the brothers Grimm. Music by Maurice Yvain. Choreography and production by Serge Lifar. Scenery and costumes designed by Bouchène. Scenery painted and built by MM. Moulène and Deshays. First performed at the Thèâtre National de l'Opéra, Paris, on Wednesday, November 14th, 1951.

CAST

Snow-White	Liane Daydé
The Queen	.. Nina Vyroubova
The Huntsman ..	.. Serge Lifar
The Man of the Forest	.. Max Bozzoni
The Prince	Jean-Paul Andréani
The Seven Dwarfs ..	MM. Efimoff, Franchetti, Bari, Duflot, Descombey, Auburtin, Romand
The Dragonfly ..	.. Claude Bessy
The Glow-worm ..	.. Josette Clavier
The Fairy	.. Jacqueline Rayet
The Queen's Footman	.. Xavier Andréani
The Queen's Jester	.. M. Descombey

MM. Legrand, Sauvageot, Decarli, Lionard.
Mlles. Gérodez, Devanel, Sianina, Jhanyne
Mlles. Million, Collement, Berthéas, Nau[illegible], Serval, Perrot, Bizet, Montbazon, Vauchelle, Manal, Delaubier, Audoynaud, Souard.
MM. Lacotte, Blanc, Jodel, Lefevre, Ernoux, Reschal, Duthoit, Jamet, Parres, Pomie, Aarelli.
And the pupils of the Ecole de Danse.
Conductor: M. Louis Fourestier

IN the whole history of the Paris Opéra, stretching back for nearly three centuries *Blanche-Neige* is only the second ballet to fill an evening's programme on its own; the other ballet to have done so being *Sylvia* which was played alone for its first three performances in 1876. Heralded as it was by much publicity, the first performance of Lifar's new ballet, therefore, had been eagerly awaited as an historic occasion.

THE STORY

The curtain rose as the overture began, to reveal a drop curtain on which was painted a circlet of flowers against a pale blue ground. The first scene is set in the Palace of the Queen. Snow-White, the little orphan princess, appears dancing happily, and soon afterwards there follows the majestic entrance of the Queen. Proud of her great beauty, the Queen has a magic mirror which, in reply to her question, has always told her that she was the fairest in the land. But now she is given a different answer, that Snow-White is fairer than she. Consumed with jealousy, the Queen summons a Huntsman and commands him to slay the child and bring back her heart as evidence of the deed.

In the next scene, the Huntsman finds Snow-White by a lake not far from the Palace. He draws his dagger, but the child's pitiful appeal touches his heart. She promises to remain in the forest if only he will spare her, and, thinking that she will soon be devoured by beasts, he lets her go. A fawn leaps by, and seizing his gun, the Huntsman shoots it and from its body cuts out the heart, which he presents to the Queen as being that of Snow-White.

Wandering in the forest, Snow-White comes upon a clearing and lies down on the ground to sleep, untroubled by the wild creatures who live in the shadow of the foliage. When she awakes, she sees a little cottage half-hidden in the trees and, curious, climbs the steps leading up to it and enters. Soon the owners of this cottage—seven dwarfs who dig mines in the mountains—come home from work and discover the intruder. But when they have recovered from their surprise, these kindly little folk settle down to sleep outside as the curtain on the first act falls.

On awakening the next morning, Snow-White is at first frightened by the dwarfs, but they soon win her confidence and, after she has told them her story she agrees to stay and keep house for them. But the magic mirror has told the Queen of Snow-White's whereabouts, and twice does she attempt to kill the girl: first as a witch when she gives her a poisoned comb, and then, when this has failed, as a gipsy with a poisoned apple. The Dwarfs return from their work to find Snow-White apparently lifeless. While they are mourning their friend, the sound of horns is heard and a neighbouring prince appears with his hunting party. The dwarfs show him Snow-White, and so enraptured is he by her beauty that he decides to give her a worthy burial. But happily a good fairy appears and brings Snow-White back to life. The two young people fall in love, and watched by the seven sad dwarfs, make their way out of the forest towards the castle of the Prince.

In the last act, it is Snow-White's wedding day. The Queen and the Huntsman are delivered to the dwarfs who, thirsting for vengeance, are armed with torches and instruments of torture. But Snow-White forgives them, and finally everyone joins in the general rejoicing.

INVENTIVE CHOREOGRAPHY

THROUGHOUT almost the entire ballet, one's interest is gripped by the inventive choreography. Only in the last act does the inspiration seem to flag: musically and choreographically, this is the weakest part of the ballet.

In the development of the action, the contrasting characters of the Queen and Snow-White are very clearly brought out. Of the two roles, the Queen's is by far the most rewarding: in turn appearing as the cruel sovereign, the sinister witch and the beguiling gipsy, Vyroubova gave proof of a dramatic power such as perhaps no other dancer at the Opéra has displayed since Carolina Rosati. After her variation as the witch—a dance ,most skilfully designed to express the twisted evil character of the Queen—the whole house burst into a thunderous ovation. Seven minutes later, she entered the stage again, having put on her gipsy costume, and danced as though completely fresh. Her performance in this scene was a real triumph of artistry and strength.

Liane Daydé, lacking the experience of Vyroubova, and having a less complex role to interpret, made naturally less impression on the public, but her youth, her small delicate build, and her beauty made her an ideal Snow-White. She was equally charming whether as the innocent and carefree maiden, dancing with flowers in her arms before the appearance of the Huntsman, as the bewildered child who finds herself alone in the mysterious forest, or as the lovely bride.

Sharing the honours with these two ballerinas were the seven dwarfs. Their small stature was at once conveyed by a cunning trick of perspective. After Snow-White has entered the cottage, seven small children come on, and after a short dance leave the stage near the back-cloth; almost immediately afterwards the dwarfs, now represented by grown men, enter nearer the footlights. Thus the illusion of their size is created which is never lost. At the end of the second act, as the Prince and Snow-White ascend the path towards the distant castle, it is again a child who represents one of the dwarfs running after them to catch a last glimpse of the lovely girl. The dances of the dwarfs display most effectively the brilliant technique of the male *sujets* of the Opéra, and at the same time are so contrived that in the eyes of the audience they seem to remain, at most, only half the size of everybody else. Though there is not a passage of conventional

Daydé and corps de ballet *of fairies, in front of the Dwarfs' house in Scene* 3, *Act I.* (*Photo: Lipnitzki*)

Liane Daydé and Jean-Paul Andréani in Act 3. After all their adventures, Snow-White and The Prince are married and the wicked Queen is forgiven. The ballet ends in a divertissment and general rejoicing.

(Photo: Lipnitzki)

mime in the whole ballet, the characters of the dwarfs, like those of the Queen and Snow-White, are strongly drawn.

MUSICAL CONTROVERSY

The greatest controversy which *Blanche-Neige* has caused centres on the music. Certainly Yvain's score is unashamedly light, melodious and rhythmical, but for that very reason it is eminently danceable and suited to the type of *ballet-féerie* to which *Blanche-Neige* belongs. It is by no means a perfect score—the orchestration is unsubtle, there are uninteresting passages, and the last act includes a number with a jazz rhythm and a Viennese waltz which, are vulgar—but, whatever the purists may say, it is, on the whole, better ballet-music than many other scores which have been accepted at the Opéra of recent years.

Bouchène's settings and costumes fit the mood of the fairy tale admirably, particularly his forest scenes. The effect at the end of Act II, however, when the trees part to the show Prince's castle standing on a distant hilltop, was spoilt by insufficient lighting. Since this is the climax of the ballet, the castle should surely burst into view in a sudden blaze of light, like a glittering jewel.

REVISION ESSENTIAL

A certain amount of revision will no doubt be made in the light of the public's reaction, for the ballet, good though it is, has a certain number of weak points, not in the choreography, but in the unfolding of the action. One is, for example, left wondering why the Queen is not angry with the Huntsman who has deceived her by not killing Snow-White, and again why the dwarfs vent their wrath on this poor Huntsman to whom Snow-White owes her life. Nor is one shown the Queen's discovery of her deception, which would surely make an admirable subject for a dramatic scene, as well as being the key to her behaviour in the second act. And the role of the Prince—at the moment very much of a cardboard character—could profitably be developed. The ballet would also gain in effect by the omission of the last act, which has little bearing on the story, and by the addition in its stead of a longer and more striking apotheosis to the second act.

With a few changes and cuts, *Blanche Neige* should earn a permanent place in the Opéra repertory.

IVOR GUEST

NEXT MONTH

We shall publish many photographs and opinions of Massine's *Donald of the Burthens* at Covent Garden. Also George Skibine's *Le Prisonnier du Caucase* and Alan Carter's *Christmas Carol*.

BAGATELLE

First given by Ballet Workshop at the Mercury Theatre on November 11, 1951. Choreography by Michael Charnley; Music by Howard Ferguson. Costumes, Henry Gravency.

CAST

Sonya Hana — June Leighton

Terry Gilbert

MANY people thought that the success of Michael Charnley's first ballet, *No lips for comfort*, was due to the distinguished dancing of the choreographer himself. In the new work he has proved that this was not merely a flash in the pan. He has managed to create a plotless work that has an underlying emotion. The *pas de deux*, *pas de trois* and *soli* flow into each other with an approach that is both vigorous and lyrical. We look forward to seeing him use more dancers in a full-length ballet.

June Leighton, Sonya Hana and Terry Gilbert in Bagatelle.
(Photo: Paul Wilson)

curtain up!

Ballerina Pamela May talking to critic Kenneth Pearson and Lord Montague of Beaulieu at the party given by Whitbreads at the Nag's Head.

(Photo : A. C. K. Ware)

"IF you want to write," said Dame Ninette de Valois, "don't write a book, be a critic."

"I wrote a book once," she continued, "and although I have now outgrown my ideas they are there for ever between two covers. The critic, on the other hand, is soon forgotten and in a few hours lands upside down on the kitchen floor. But in the book I wrote there is one page that I would never alter—the dedication. This was to Lilian Baylis and Marie Rambert—the cornerstones of English ballet."

The occasion at which this statement was made was the Dancers Circle Dinner, organised by *The Dancing Times*, in honour of the Silver Jubilee of Madame Rambert's first production.

At the Savoy Hotel on December 9, a hundred people consisting of the dancers, choreographers, and designers who owe their present exalted position to Rambert's guidance, together with friends and critics, all gathered to pay tribute to the lady who, together with Dame Ninette, has been responsible for the meteoric rise of ballet in this country. It was fitting that the First Lady of Covent Garden should be in the chair.

After the speeches, Mr. Cyril Beaumont opened a discussion on the subject of "Are the themes of many modern ballets too complicated?" This got very lively though no particular conclusion was reached. A climax occurred when Mr. Philip Richardson said how much he resented the fact that many modern works could not be understood until we had waded through some "beastly book of poetry."

THERE must be something curious in the air of Los Angeles, California. To this city went Elaine Fifield, prima ballerina of Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, engaged to a gentleman in England. To this city also went John Lanchbery, conductor of the orchestra in the same company, engaged to a lady in England. Upon arrival, these two married each other. We know our readers will join us in wishing them every happiness.

To this city also came Moira Shearer, with her husband Ludovic Kennedy, in order to make a film about Hans Andersen with Danny Kaye. Within a few days of her arrival she announces that she is going to have a baby. Again we are sure that readers will join us in sending her good wishes, though many are rather saddened that we shall not be seeing her dance for some time.

This makes another change in this City of Changes because Renee Jeanmaire will now replace Shearer, and Roland Petit will do the choreography which was originally to have been done by Balanchine.

The dancer's pub by the stage door of Covent Garden—The Nag's Head. The Saloon bar with the theatrical prints on the wall.

(Photo ; A. C. K. Ware)

TO enjoy yourself as did Boswell with good food, good wine, a handsome room, in the congenial atmosphere of the theatre, would seem almost an impossibility to-day. Yet at the Nag's Head in Floral Street, opposite the stage door of Covent Garden, this is possible.

On December 13, Whitbread's Brewery gave a party at this famous hostelry, to inaugurate the new decorations. On the walls of the dining-room and the bars, are hung a fine collection of theatrical prints and some contemporary stage designs. Many of the prints concern the ballet. the whole effect is charming and it is to be hoped that other public houses will follow the enterprising example of Messrs. Whitbread. Incidently, food is served until 11 o'clock at night which should be a great blessing to all those who are starving after the ballet.

MANY ballet lovers will envy the good fortune of Doreen and Olive Mills of Leyton. They have been the most faithfu followers of Festival Ballet. Every night whenever the company was in, or within reach of, London—there were Doreen and Olive. Members of the company looked for them as they came out of the stage door, particularly Dr. Braunsweg. When he told them that the company was going to Monte Carlo, the girls sighed and wished they could go too. They went home and talked to their parents and decided to take their holidays when the company gave their season on the French Riviera.

Now their patience has been rewarded because Dr. Braunsweg let them travel with the company at reduced rates. For two weeks they were the guests of the company at each performance and their return fare paid. All those hours standing in the rain and cold were not wasted after all !

THE news that Frantz in *Coppelia* is again to be played by a woman, will be greeted with mixed feelings. Some months ago we announced the break with tradition at the Paris Opéra and that the role was to be confided to a male dancer. Frantz has been played in travesty since the ballet's creation in 1870.

Serge Lifar, whose respect for the great tradition of the Opéra is well-known, has now given orders for the travesty role to be restored. On December 14, 1951, it was played again by Paulette Dynalix, the most sensitive actress in the company.

AFTER the first performance of Massine's *Donald of the Burthens* on December 12, the Directors of Covent Garden gave one of the best parties in the Crush Bar that has been held for some time. There was plenty of good food, plenty of drink, and plenty of dancers. The best dressed women were Margot Fonteyn and Ludmilla Tcherina.

happy birthday to...

Herbert Bliss	New York City Ballet	January 21
Monique Bernachova	De Cuevas Grand Ballet	January 23
Maria Tallchief	New York City Ballet	January 24
Michéle Grimault	De Cuevas Grand Ballet	January 25
Peter Franklin-White	Sadler's Wells Ballet	January 27
Stanley Holden	Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet	January 27
Jeanne Luby	International Ballet	January 29
Georges Skibine	De Cuevas Grand Ballet	January 30
Derek Westlake	Empire Theatre Ballet	February 4
Audrey Brookes	Rambert Ballet	February 5

Readers with birthday cards for dancers can address them c/o DANCE AND DANCERS, Mersey House, 132-4, Fleet Street, London, E.C.4. Letters will be forwarded to the dancer's home address to arrive on the birthday. Please post early.

Dancers you should know

VLADIMIR BROSKO

NOT many dancers in England, nor even in Europe, have spent two years in a concentration camp. It happened to Vladimir Brosko, the son of a Polish general. He was involved in the war while still a child, and was deported from Poland to Germany. He was lucky enough to escape into France just before the end of the war and continue his studies, which he had only just begun in Warsaw. He obviously had a lot of adventures, some of them probably grim. But he is never very keen to talk about them; he would rather talk about dancing, and the fact that it leaves no time for anything else.

Before he joined the International Ballet this year Brosko had seen a lot of the world. He had had the immense luck which many dancers and dance-students dream about—he had been discovered in the good old-fashioned way by Bronislava Nijinska, who had seen him at Pianowski's class in Paris. The result was that he signed a contract with the Marquis de Cuevas' Company and danced in practically every country.

All this gave him excellent theatre experience. Other things happened too, and the most exciting during the company's season in Cairo. Brosko was fortunate enough to attract the attention of a Certain Lady whose nearness to the Throne does not allow her name to be mentioned. But dancing meant much more than the entertainments of Egyptian society, and the young Brosko left Cairo with the rest of the company. Even now his friends have never stopped teasing him about it.

When he came to England and joined International Ballet he found the enthusiasm of English audiences, to use his own words, "absolument merveilleux". He finds it all very encouraging, but like so many dancers and critics from the Continent he would like to see more discrimination. All the same he thinks it wonderful for a country the size of ours to have so many big theatres and such large audiences. The "B" towns of England, as the company call them—Birmingham, Bradford, Bolton, Bournemouth, etc., amuse him very much but his favourite is Oxford, where he enjoys rowing and taking photographs.

So far Brosko, who is still in his early twenties has not been seen in many important roles. At the Festival Hall season of International Ballet he danced Frantz in a few performances of *Coppelia*, his youth and grace gave the role immense charm. His physique and personality seem to fit him very well for the male part in *Les Sylphides*, and perhaps it is not altogether an accident that, like Chopin, he belongs to both Poland and France. *Carnaval* would also be a suitable work for him.

Brosko has both style and technique, and has had valuable experience while still very young. If he remains in this country—for the moment he is not certain if the Aliens Regulations will allow him to do so—everyone will look forward to seeing more of him. He is also determined to make a real effort at learning English—for he thinks England is a wonderful country.

MARGARET CROSSLAND

Have you seen a dancer you would like to have featured in these columns? If so, send us your requests and we shall be very pleased to give them our consideration.

The aim of "Dancers you should know" is to present artists who, although not by any means unknown, have not yet received all the recognition they deserve. In fact they should be drawn from the large army of soloists who are, after all, the backbone of any organisation.

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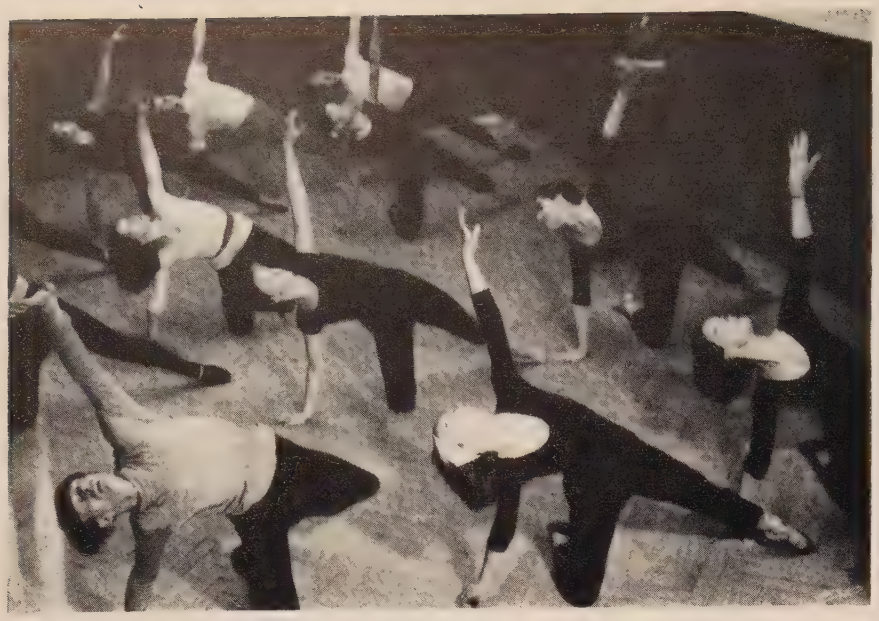


(Above) A typical class in progress at the Sigurd Leeder School of Dance. (Right) Students studying the form of Dance Notation which is painted on the floor of the studio.

So you want to dance

by ANTHONY COWPER

5. SIGURD LEEDER SCHOOL, 46a Regent Square, W.C.1

This month we are leaving the paths of classical ballet and visiting a school of the so-called modern dance. The school is one of the most famous of its type in the world—Sigurd Leeder's.

WAS it Louis XIV who said, "*L'état c'est moi?*" Possibly, in any case an anarchistically free translation of the phrase to "the school is the teacher", provides not only a valuable truth about schools, but also a useful point of departure for this article.

Leeder the man. Medium height; fair, thining hair; mobile features, one moment looking a saint, the next an urchin, the next a satyr; friendly, slightly intense manner.

Leeder the career. He was born in Hamburg at the beginning of the century. Was once an art-student studying theatrical design, but at the age of seventeen he began training as a dancer under Clara Norden. Norden had worked with Mary Wigman under Rudolph Laban in Switzerland.

Leeder ran away from home and had to find such work in the theatre as he could to support himself; as an actor or dancer he worked in cabaret, vaudeville and the straight theatre. He formed a dance-team with a girl from Munich, their dances all being composed by Leeder himself. In those years Hamburg was the cultural centre of Germany, and it was to Hamburg that Leeder and Kurt Jooss drifted and met.

Partnership with Jooss

The partnership with Jooss produced the Ballets Jooss. The flowering of that partnership, the rise of the Ballets Jooss, the apparent withering of its creative faculties, the decay of the company and its subsequent recent renaissance in Essen, do not here concern us. What we need to remember is that Jooss was primarily the creator, while Leeder was primarily the teacher. Primarily, but of course Leeder not only produced the choreography for one of the company's ballets (*Sailor's Fancy*) but also is a creative teacher. His classroom "studies" have all the elements of creative choreography.

What is Leeder's conception of the modern dance? Well in the first place he does not term it "modern" dancing; on the analogy of the spade, dancing to him is just dancing.

Mixture of elements

He has adopted and adapted many of Laban's principles, but there is also a strong classical element in his teaching. This classical element is no new heresy expedient to the times, but has been part of Leeder's teaching from the earliest days. Leeder himself has had an academic classical education, and from the first insisted on the importance of classical dance in the Jooss-Leeder curriculum. The principal difference, as I see it, between his teaching and strict classicism is, whereas the classical dance is concerned almost entirely with "light" movement, Leeder concentrates on both "light" and "heavy", the ethereal and the earth-bound.

Three types of class

The present school is derived from the Jooss-Leeder schools of the late twenties up to war-time years. It was formed in London in 1947, and when Jooss, Zullig, Alexander, de Mosa and Soederbaum left to re-form the old company at Essen, Leeder decided to remain at home and continue with his teaching.

The school has three types of classes. Those for full-time students (from about the age of fifteen) who take a three-year course, amateur classes in the evening (these can cover the same curriculum as the full-time course) and open classes, which are held for professional and student dancers of all types.

In addition to teaching dancing, this is the only school in the country (as far as I know) that teaches choreography. It also teaches the reading and writing of Dance Notation. Dance Notation, the system by which dances can be written down on paper in a manner analogous to a musical score, is probably the most important event ever to take place in the history of ballet.

Fountain-head of Dance Notation

It is nothing new. Some form of Dance Notation existed in the seventeenth century, but through the efforts of Laban and his disciples and the wide use of the system by their pupils in New York, we have now obtained and proved a system of choreographic notation which can be used to score all types of movement, all classes of ballet. Leeder, and the Leeder school, is naturally the fountain-head of Dance Notation in this country.

Where do Leeder's students go at the completion of their training? Some go to Essen, some elsewhere abroad (a group of them have recently formed up in Israel), some into modern musicals, some (like the promising Michael Charnley) start as choreographers on their own account. Many teach, others will become Dance Notation scribes. What, sadly, they do not do is to form a dance-group in Great Britain. This country badly needs a well-disciplined dance-group of artistic purpose, that is outside the classical tradition. This group could be a re-vitalising element in British Ballet. If in time the country acquires such a group, I feel convinced that most of its dancers will almost certainly come from Leeder.

NEXT MONTH

Anthony Cowper will visit the Phyllis Bedells School at 28 Quex Road, West Hampstead, N.W.6. If our readers are interested in any particular school we shall always be pleased to consider an article or supply the information they require.

Approach to dancing

by JOHN GREGORY

The third of a series of monthly articles in which John Gregory, Director of the School of Russian Ballet, is taking readers through all stages in a dancer's development. Having dealt with age and suitability, he now turns to the delicate subject of teaching the child.

3. CHILD TEACHING

THE first principle that comes to mind when one approaches the problem of child teaching is discipline. A child that comes to dancing for the first time, has little or no conception of co-ordinating movement in time and space. If children have a feeling for dance they will hop and leap about with spontaneous abandon, and the spectacle as such may be quite fascinating in the case of a child that has the spirit and desire to dance. The problem of the teacher however is to guide the child's natural impulses into a disciplined dance form.

The baby of four years will of course require different treatment from the child of nine years. In some schools the baby class is not considered in the light of serious or constructive study—but rather as a pretty and fanciful pastime more useful for developing the infant's imagination, than any mental or physical purpose.

But the babies class in the Russian School develops a rhythmic sense, a plastic form, a feeling for line, and balance and dance-flow.

The worth of these very early years in developing and disciplining the child's sensibilities cannot be overestimated. Dr. Montersori who has made a life study of the science of child teaching, and whose wonderful educational system for infants is world famous has said that the most formative years of a child's life and the years most suitable for absorbing learning are between two and seven years.

Children love to perform

Apart from Dr. Montersori's theory, I think that many educational and social experiments have proved that early conditioning of impulses, and tendencies ensure the future course of the individual to a very large extent. Thus the germ of an art that is planted early becomes in the recipient its second nature in years to come. If nurtured and cared for with scientific encouragement that second nature should, if the mental and physical potential be adequate, in time produce a rare talent.

I think that too many teachers fail to credit children with the alert mental capacities and resourceful energies that make learning easy. They do not allow sufficient freedom for the child's expressive capabilities.

Waving balloons and chasing butterflies are happy pastimes for the baby class of three to five year olds, but children of six and seven may already start with a short and simple *barre* work. In the centre, this should be followed with *port de bras*, and simple combinations of two and three steps. Finishing perhaps with a phrase of dance that may be added-to each week and which by the end of the term will grow into a dance.

Children love to perform, and the privilege of performing a dance at the conclusion of the lesson is for them a great reward.

Away with drudgery

It appears to me that there still exists in this country an old fashioned notion that to learn properly the pupil must go through the drudgery of having the A.B.C. of ballet pounded into them, with merciless and unimaginative drilling, learning each step with slow and monotonous repetition, until all the fragrance, and spontaneous feeling of dance has been annihilated.

I do not believe in teaching one step at a time; nor do I believe in developing one part of the body, or one set of muscles before another. I do not advocate preparation of the feet first, then the legs, next thighs, torso, arms, and finally head. On the contrary I believe the whole dancer's body should grow simultaneously with a gradual conscious development.

In the class I extol all exercises commencing with the *barre* making use of the whole body. No step is executed solely by the feet, or legs or arms, but is co-ordinated with the rest of the body. Whether it be a *tendu*, a *frappé*, a *fondu* or a *grand battement*, the arms, torso and head play their corresponding part in the harmonious execution of the step.

It may appear an impossible task to attempt to teach classical dance, in all its completeness, to the very young, from the very beginning. Yet this we do in a simple and constructive way.

I do not teach set pieces; and do not repeat the same *enchainements* week after week until the child has learned them like a parrot. Every lesson brings a new outlook, a new problem and each lesson carries the pupil on to new discoveries that eventually add up to the sum total of a dancer.

The danger of force

Great care must be taken never to force children, muscles do not grow in a day, the development must be gradual, the absorbing of knowledge, and the cultivation of facility crystallizes almost unnoticeably like all growth.

Any forced growth or development will be freakish and dangerous. Children must not be put on their *pointes* until their legs are sufficiently strong. There is no hurry for the child to dance on *pointe;* it is a later adornment to embellish a brilliant technique. There is nothing more painful to me than observing children tottering on *pointe* before they are ready; and the ills and malformations that may result from such devilish practices are a menace, to health and normality.

Over a period of time, that is to say a few terms, the child subconsciously absorbs many of the nuances and intricate combinations that seem so baffiing to beginners. After a continuous application, natural desire to dance is made manifest in the joyous ability to dance. As though by magic, the rhythm and the substance of dance becomes moulded into a youthful reality.

Experimental film completed

by CLIVE BARNES

The ballet film made by the Oxford University Experimental Film Group is now finished. The result is being eagerly watched. Will this solve the problems of marrying the film to the dance ?

It may be remembered that last August we gave the first preliminary announcement that the Oxford University Experimental Film Group were making a ballet film. This has now been made and only awaits editing to be ready for distribution. The unit under the general artistic direction of American artist Sam Kaner, shot the film at Cheltenham College during the 'long vac'. The impetus and idea of the project came from Kaner, a most interesting artist who has developed a new engraving technique. Kaner's work is conceived in a very personal idiom, and his film is largely non-representational although not (and will all slick reviewers please note this) surrealist.

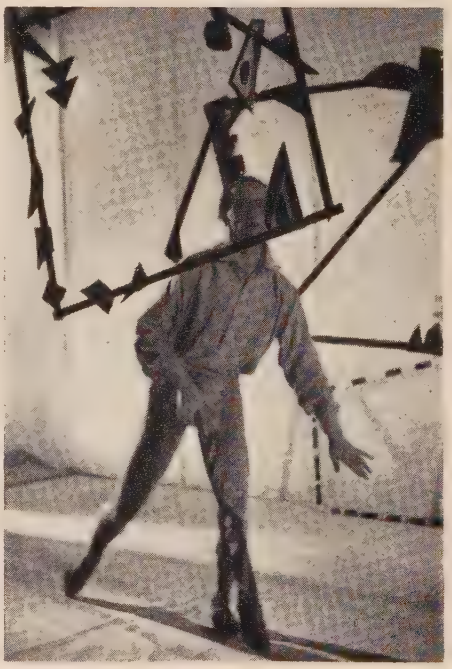
The story of the film is slight. A blind artist leaves his studio, has his sight restored but finds that this gift brings him no respite from his suffering. There are three characters each of whom are identified by a musical theme and a primary colour. It is in the reaction, both decorative and emotional, of these colours from which the film takes one of its main interests.

After a few false starts the music was finally entrusted to Christopher Shaw. The choreography is by Tutte Lemkow, who also dances the blind artist. The girl who helps the artist is danced by Sara Luzita.

Most of the film has been directed by an Oxford research student, Guy Coté ; the important final sequence, telling of the artist's disillusionment among the grey streets of reality, has been shot in montage. This part is directed by Vladimir Telberg, an American artist who specialised in this photographic technique.

The film uses a few abstract shapes designed by sculptor David Tarver, the rest of the designs are, of course, Kaner's.

One awaits the film's first showing with the greatest of interest. It seems that Kaner most definitely has something of considerable importance to offer contemporary ballet; let us hope that this film will prove to be his first contribution.



The photograph shows Tutte Lemkow as the blind man who has his sight restored but obtains no comfort. (*Photo : Roger Mayne*)

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HAMISH HAMILTON

New Books

Dance to the Piper, by Agnes de Mille (Hamish Hamilton, 18*s.*).

THE telephone rang furiously. It was Marie Rambert.

"Hello," I said, "I was just reading about you."

"Where?" she enquired rather nervously.

"In Agnes de Mille's book."

I almost bit back my words because, although the chapters on Rambert were excellent and a perfect portrait, it dawned on me that perhaps not everyone would think them altogether kindly. I need not have worried.

"What a good book it is!" she went on, "I think it is the best book on ballet since Karsavina's *Theatre Street*. Of course she does talk about my parsimony which is not true because every penny I have put back into the company. But I did not mind because Aggie is so honest, she is completely honest about herself, therefore, one does not mind what she says. I consider it to be a great book and I hope it has the success it deserves."

Rambert was right—it is a very honest book. It could probably have been written only by an American for in this country few people would dare to write with such candour. We must be grateful for this because with the greatest economy she has managed to give an eye witness account of the first rockings of the cradle of British ballet. She is completely aware of Rambert's faults yet she is generous in her praise of all that Rambert has achieved. The description of lunch at Campden Hill is a gem.

It is the writing of one who has suffered and struggled, who has known both poverty and frustration in Europe and her own country. Her eventual triumph with *Rodeo* makes one as glad as if it had happened to oneself. The events leading up to that *premiere* make as exciting reading as anything I can remember. All those little things that seem so disastrous, when great moments are at hand, occurred to her—the costumes were late and had to be put on in the wings, Mrs. Massine and Krassovska gossiped in Russian while de Mille was trying to think of her role.

The true value of the book lies in her remarkable perception and ability to transmit all her experiences and impressions of those with whom she has worked, to the reader. From her early days in Hollywood to the present time, her life has run parallel with the growth of the national trend in American ballet. It is doubtful whether we shall ever get a better account of this important phase of ballet history. It shows so clearly the difficulties of touring a large company in the States and the unnatural way of living that a nomad life imposes on young dancers.

Owing to de Mille, Martha Graham, Eugene Loring, and Antony Tudor, ballet in that continent cast off the yoke of the all-pervading Russian tradition and started something that derived its impetus from national sources. A very great deal had to be broken down before this flower could break its way through the hardened Russian crust.

The book has the verve of Cornelia Otis Skinner's *Our Hearts were Young and Gay* and the wisdom of *Theatre Street*. Hamish Hamilton are to be congratulated on publishing two such valuable books as this and Nabokov's *Old Friends and New Music* (reviewed last month). They both make welcome additions to our groaning book-shelves but this new work will become a classic and should be enjoyed by everyone, even if they have no great love of ballet, on account of its humanity, courage and entertainment value.

Lifar on classical ballet, edited by Arnold Haskell, with a foreword by Karsavina (Wingate, 21*s.*).

A SLIGHTLY disturbing note is struck by the first glance at this book—on the jacket is written "LIFAR on classical ballet." The great tradition, built up over centuries, takes very second place to the present Director of the Paris Opéra. Nor is this impression in any way nullified when on opening the volume, we find thirty-six photographs devoted, not to the glories of classical ballet ,but to Lifar and his creations for France's national company.

This is rather a pity because the book is otherwise most instructive. Lifar's sincerity and adoration of the dance are obvious and, if for no other reason, the volume is an enlightening glimpse into the teaching at the Paris Opéra where no doubt it is the bible of every dancer.

On the whole it does not seem to add much to the other books that have already been published for the enlightenment of the not completely initiated.

Lifar's inaugural address at the foundation of the Choreographic Academy at the Opéra, which concludes the book, is a most enlightening document in that it reveals much of why one likes or dislikes his choreography.

The many drawings of Monique Lancelot are sketchy and full of movement. If illustrations to text books are to be of any use they should be crystal-clear with nothing left to the imagination. Here, most of the arm and hand positions would get no bouquets from me if I happened to see them on any reputable stage.

P. W.

Dance and Dancers . . . . AT HOME

SADLER'S WELLS AT COVENT GARDEN

OPENING PROGRAMME

THE opening programme of the Winter season at Covent Garden, on November 21, suffered from curious arrangement.

Petit's *Ballabile* made a good opening ballet. It has always seemed a rather empty joke but in this position in the programme it gained very considerably. The three opening numbers—A Class-room, Sunday on the river, and A street in the rain—are good. It is in the middle of the circus scene that the work starts to falter and become a bore. The finale, Impressions of Spain, is both bad burlesque and bad ballet.

The performance all round was better owing to the use of twenty-one dancers instead of the previous ten—their exhaustion at the end is not such an all-in puffing and blowing as before. But the work can still get a better performance than it did on this particular evening. Elvin and Grant were as polished as always and it was good to see the humorous qualities of Margaret Dale put to full use. The Clavé decor remains one of the most exciting in the repertoire.

Ashton's *Les Patineurs* is not the sort of ballet to make the centre-piece of an evening's entertainment. In this position it seems more trivial than it actually is. It nevertheless got the finished performance which we have now come to expect It is extraordinary how fresh it still appears after all these years. It would seem that this, together with Ashton's *Les Rendezvous*, will be the stand-by opening and closing works as long as the name Sadler's Wells is attached to any company.

All this froth only accentuated the stodginess of De Valois' *Don Quixote*. It is a work that, owing to the intelligence behind it, needs very careful presentation. The drama never reaches a climax exhilarating enough to send an audience out into the cold night.

Anne Heaton took over Fonteyn's dual Dulcinea—Aldonza role, which has never been one in which anyone could make a great deal of impact. As the vulgar trollop, Aldonza, Heaton was very good indeed but as the Lady Dulcinea she lacked the almost mystical purity of Fonteyn. A false tummy never quite makes Grant's Sancho Panza as Cervantes intended him to be. Legerton's Travelling Barber is another of those nimble loose-limbed caricatures which are his own especial province and which make him such a useful member of the company. Field's errant knight is based very much on Helpmann's interpretation and although lacking some of the theatrical sense of the creator is was finely conceived. The trouble is that the character has never been " in the round " and is too literary in its conception to project over the footlights.

The music by Roberto Gerhard remains the most satisfactory feature of the whole ballet and further acquaintance increases one's admiration for it. The Cave of Montesinos scene is the most integrated in the entire work.

BALLET IMPERIAL

IF the programme arrangement on the opening night was bad, then the programme on Friday November 30 made-up for all these failings. It would be hard to find two better bedfellows than Balanchine's *Ballet Imperial* and Coralli's *Giselle*—both masterpieces from this and the last century.

A few months ago we had occasion to praise Rowena Jackson in the principal role in Balanchine's work (it is of interest to note that over a year ago we said that she should make the ideal Balanchine dancer); now she has polished-up her performance until it sparkles. Only two things mar what would otherwise be as near perfection as we expect to see—a tendancy to open her mouth too much, and occasional weaknesses in her arms.

Rosemary Lindsay still has a long way to go before her Girl in the Black Tutu approaches that of Beryl Grey. She has gaiety but this is not enough and she also should think more about her arms; a frequently broken line is irritating in a work where perfection of line is essential. However she has improved considerably since she first took over the role.

Had one never seen Somes as the principal male, it is possible that Field would appear to be completely adequate. Adequate he certainly is, but he does not seem able to achieve that nobility that raises this ballet above the mere abstract and gives it its title. His partnering is excellent.

Now that this work is regaining its original glory could not more attention be paid to the lines? Seeing it from above and at the diagonal I was struck by a certain raggedness, particularly in the first movement. It should not be all that difficult to keep the lines straight, nor to see that arms are raised and lowered in unison. It is things like this that cause people to hurl their bricks at Sadler's Wells. It needs such a very slight heave to get the company back to its original pinnacle.

ELVIN'S IMPROVED GISELLE

HOW Elvin has improved her Giselle! The faults that were apparent in her initial performances have been ironed out. She now gives a perfect copy book performance which only needs personal touches and dramatic punctuation. I still maintain that she should use Chauviré as her inspiration—the only ballerina in the world who should do so. She has the temperament to "ham" it a bit without losing any dignity. For instance, Chauviré carried the pitcher of wine for the Duke and Bathilde on her shoulder which was a striking and beautiful movement. Its great use being that it could also be repeated in the mad scene. I am not suggesting that Elvin should repeat this but if she can introduce a few more definite touches it will obviate the use of padding. At the moment her mad scene contains too much wandering around. I also feel that the method of getting her hair down is clumsy; it would be so much more natural for her mother to take it down rather than the tugging at flowers and hair nets that went on.

Her second act is beautiful and she has now got rid of her *Swan Lake* arms. She should practice the flower-throwing episode because if Albrecht has to turn back

Violetta Elvin in the second act of Lac des Cygnes. *(Photo: Maurice Seymour)*

to pick them up it makes an ugly movement. I feel certain that with a certain amount of tightening-up in some places and added breadth in others, her performance will be one of considerable importance.

The Albrecht of Somes was slightly disappointing particularly when compared with that of Rassine and Melville. It looked as though his leg was still giving him trouble. He is exceedingly noble but his second act variation, the one chance he has to shine alone, was gabbled.

The peasant *pas de deux* was well danced by Nadia Nerina and Brian Shaw. His first variation was brilliant but trying to exceed this in his second, he failed. Surely the villagers should pay more attention to these dances instead of standing around like dummies. The only sign of life came from Julia Farron as Bathilde (the best interpretation I have ever seen) who put her hand over her mouth to supress a yawn. Whether this was intended to indicate that she was tired and wanted to rest, or whether she was bored by the entertainment, was hard to fathom. It looked as though she did not care for the dancing; not a very happy touch as it could become infectious among the audience.

Leslie Edwards is such a good Hilarion that it is a pity his death is not more dramatically contrived—people not knowing the ballet could have no idea of his sticky end. He should not presuppose the arrival of the Ducal party, in the first act, before the hunting horn is heard in the orchestra; it causes the situation to lose impact however slight it may be.

Apart from all these minor faults this and the production of Festival Ballet, continue to be the finest in the world today.

ASHTON'S COPPELIUS

CONTRARY to what most people imagine, the critic is always willing to admit when he is wrong. I have always thought that it was essential for Dr. Coppelius to be sinister, I felt he should have this quality in order to give the story its right balance.

Seeing Ashton in the role, when *Coppelia* was revived on December 7, I was almost won round to thinking that he should be a comedy character. Apart from the film, *Tales of Hoffmann*, I never cared for Helpmann's interpretation ; it was too absurd and exaggerated and he was always playing for laughs. Ashton makes the old boy both plausible and lovable, he would be even more so if he dispensed with the clockwork-mouse walk. Otherwise he is delightful and, at times, very moving. There are so many little touches that only an experienced artist could add, little touches that turn a character into a mirror held-up-to-nature rather than a contrived piece of theatre. The whole of his second act with Swanilda was a beautifully played domestic comdey ; his grief, when he discovers the whole thing is a trick, touches a chord that is rarely felt even in the death of Giselle.

I believe that Ashton tried, at one time, to make the role disagreeable. But he found it so alien to his nature that he altered it completely. For once, second thoughts were best.

This particular performance marked the return of Pamela May in a full-length classic. She had a quiet serenity rather than a sparkling brilliance, but the latter will no doubt increase when she becomes more sure of herself. It is no easy matter to return to an arduous role after almost a year without dancing. Already she is dancing much better then before her knee started to give her so much trouble.

P. W.

FUTURE PLANS

AT the moment of writing it is still uncertain when Fonteyn will return but she is going to class each day and as soon as she is ready she will be back again at Covent Garden, this may be late January or February.

The new witch ballet by Andrée Howard will have its first performance at the end of February or in March, and the new work by John Cranko, with Osbert Lancaster decor and Arthur Oldham score, will be given in the following month.

The company will appear at the San Carlos Theatre, Lisbon, in April for a week ; they may also appear after that in one of the larger commercial theatres in the same city. How long this tour will be is at present uncertain.

The Massine Scottish ballet, *Donald of the Burthens* which had its world *premiere* on December 12, will be reviewed in full in our next number.

FESTIVAL BALLET

FROM time to time we hope to report on companies during their tours. So frequently do we hear rumours that ballets, lauded by the London public and press, are not being given the best performances to a provincial audience.

Not having seen Festival Ballet since their season at Golders Green in the early autumn, I was very struck by their improvement at Birmingham in the last week in November; and this at the end of a lengthy and strenuous tour. In spite of the regretted absence of Markova, this company still has an enormous amount to offer.

Krassovska's *Giselle*, after a slow start, worked up to a very moving mad scene. Her second act, in spite of an unfortunate fall at the beginning, was very good indeed. Impossible to recognise almost anything of her first performance with the company about a year ago which was given with complete sincerity though an obvious lack of maturity. During her stay with the company she has gained in stature, her ability to phrase, and her musical sense. The ballerina, Krassovska, has emerged; no longer does she base her interpretations on other ballerinas with whom she has worked.

Gilpin's Albrecht has also matured and his dancing all through was excellent. It is only occasionally that the young boy breaks through—sometimes he smiles too quickly, sometimes he shrugs his shoulders in a too exaggerated manner. Time will eliminate these juvenile mannerisms and his should eventually be the outstanding Albrecht of our time.

Belinda Wright is a great asset to the company, she is a real *soubrette* such as we have not seen in England for many years. Her Columbine in the *Harliquinade pas de deux* is one of the most joyous pieces of dancing. Seldom have I seen such piquant charm which was never, at any moment, irritating. Everything she does is neat and perfectly executed. She should make the ideal Swanilda. In the second act of *Lac des Cygnes* she was not so successful and it seemed that she needed to be produced more. She did not always appear to know what was expected of her with the result that it was all too careful and tended to become slow. I am inclined to think that lyricism is not her strong point but it is hard to say from only one performance. Whatever her faults, she has a quality that when developed further should make her into the ballerina

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of the type we had thought to have vanished with the retirement of Baronova.

Fokine's *Petrouchka* and *Prince Igor* were better than during the London season. It was interesting to see how the whole company enters into the spirit of these works, everyone now seems to know his and her place in these works which so essentially need an understanding of such things.

The company left for Monte Carlo on December 22 and opened a five week season at Le Theatre du Casino on Christmas day. Frederick Ashton is mounting a new work for Markova and it is possible that John Cranko will also do one in the near future. With the addition of the full *Coppelia* and a possible work from Jerome Robbins, the repertoire is growing in importance.

P. W.

INTERNATIONAL BALLET

DURING December and January, the company appeared in theatres around London. Unfortunately Mona Inglesby was unable to dance because she was ill with pneumonia. It is to be hoped that by the time these words are read she will have completely recovered and be back again dancing at the head of her company.

In her absence, Claudie Algeranova took over the role of Giselle. On November 27, while the company was at Streatham Hill, she gave her first performance in this part for about a year—and with no rehearsal. There is much that is good in Algeranova's interpretation and her second act is particularly so. Her performance suffers from the general production, which is very shoddy, also from an absurd first act costume used at one time for the peasant *pas de deux*. It will be fairer to give a true judgment when she has had more performances. The settings and costumes as a whole are of unbelievable silliness—Micky Mouse landscapes and Dolly Varden costumes. All most unsuitable for the essence of romanticism.

ORIGINAL BALLET RUSSE

THE Christmas season of ballet at Festival Hall opened on December 26. Guest artists appearing with the company for the season included Sonia Arova, Paula Hinton, and Toni Lander (ballerina from The Royal Danish Ballet, Copenhagen). The repertoire included *Swan Lake* (Act II), *Coq d'Or*, *Graduation Ball*, *Paganini*, *Prince Igor*, *Les Presages*, and the new ballet *Femmes d'Alger*.

The season will be fully covered in our next issue but, from the first performances, it was obvious that the company has improved considerably since their opening at Wimbledon in October.

PAVINOFF BALLET

THE company appeared at the Richmond Theatre for two weeks from December 17 to 29 with a repertoire that consisted of *Salon de Danse*, *Swan Lake*, *Les Sylphides*, *Spectre de la Rose*, *Giselle*, *Coppelia*. The company includes many promising young dancers and it would seem better if they steered clear of the classics. Petipa ballets were designed for large theatres and big productions, they also need a super abundance of brilliance. The second act of *Swan Lake* as given on the first night was most unfortunate. The other works—*Salon de Danse* and *Mazurka*—though not particularly important as ballets seemed far more suitable for this kind of presentation.

L. T.

ROSARIO AND ANTONIO

IT is probably a mistake to return to the scene of a great triumph in a short space of time. Rosario and Antonio had become almost legendary after their first London season at the Cambridge Theatre. After their second season at this same theatre (November 12 to December 15) it became possible to see certain faults that had been overlooked at their initial appearance.

The behaviour of the audience on the opening night was such that it did not give the artists much help. The hysteria started almost before a step had been danced and Antonio reacted by giving a Danny Kaye act. He chatted to the audience, he chatted to Rosario, together they threw flowers and blew kisses until the whole spectacle became acutely embarrassing. Dancers should only speak on rare occasions.

In spite of all this, there is not the slightest question that these two are the greatest in their own particular field but one is beginning to wonder if their field is not more of the cabaret and music hall.

Probably owing to first night nerves, their opening performance was mediocre. Later in the week they regained all their own lustre. It was, however, all their old numbers that remained outstanding—his *Zapateado*, her *Malaguena*, their flamenco numbers together.

The dances from De Falla's *Three-cornered Hat* and *El Amor Brujo* were not successful. In the Miller's *farruca* from the former, Antonio was neither as good as Massine in his stylised way nor as Luisillo in his Spanish cabaret way. Nowhere did the choreography match up to the wonderful De Falla music. The presentation of these excerpts was undistinguished.

The regional dances were given with charm. Whether they were peasants from Lagartera or Yucatan they have developed a method of presentation that makes these naive romps palatable. Of all these numbers the Jota from Navarre was far and away the best.

After Pilar Lopez, the excerpts from Granados' *Goyescas* seemed most disappointing and lacked the style and invention of Argentinita's choreography.

Of their several flamenco numbers, all of them good, it was probably the two examples of *Cante Grande* that were the best. Rosario's *Taranto* and Antonio's *Cana* were on such a high level of perfection that is was possible to forget that they were actually in a theatre at all. It seemed in both these numbers that the two artists forgot that they were there to please a not always discerning public, that they were dancing for themselves alone. Gone were all the little applause-catching tricks that turn art into artifice. If dancers can produce only a few moments such as these then one can forgive all the others designed for more popular appeal.

P. W.

UDAY SHANKAR AND AMALA

SHANKAR was the first Indian dancer to appear in this country before the war. Since then he has given a season at the Piccadilly Theatre in 1949. Now he appears with his wife, Amala, and a very good company of both dancers and musicians. The two programmes given, during their fortnight's season at Princes Theatre (December 4 to 15) had variety and colour. There were several numbers which have not been seen here before. The general presentation was ideal for this sort of entertainment—intelligent lighting, beautiful costumes, and the many numbers followed each other with a smoothness that can only be acquired by many years in the theatre. Shankar himself does not do a great deal these days but there is plenty of compensation. The dances ranged from the usual tender love passages between gods and goddesses to traditional folk dances. There were also a number of Phyrric dances for the boys which gave added excitement to programmes that occasionally tended to become too quiet.

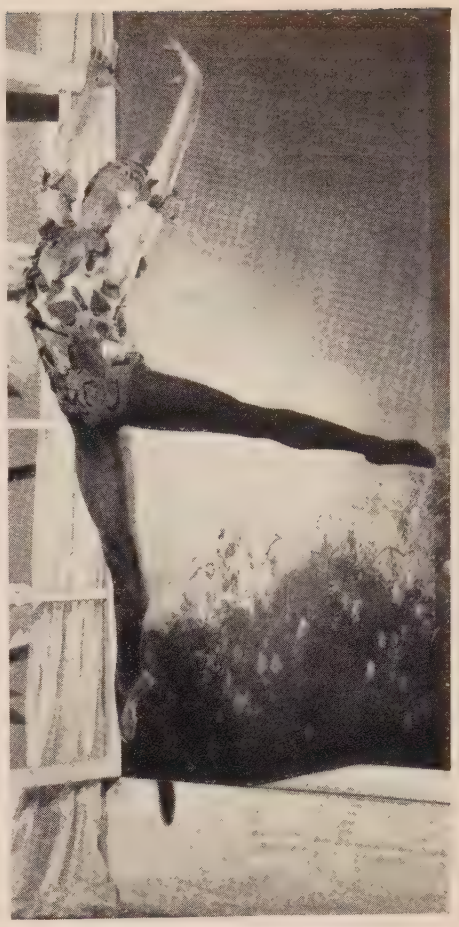
The orchestra is the best we have heard and the instrumental solos, though sometimes rather too lengthy for occidental ears, increased our knowledge of oriental musical form and sounds. The ranging of the orchestra, with these instruments, along the back of the stage makes a very satisfactory background for the dances.

L T.

THE SCHOOL OF RUSSIAN BALLET

THE School of Russian Ballet in Chelsea, directed by John Gregory, gave its second birthday performance at the French Institute in London on 11th December. The standard of dancing was extraordinarily high and all the twenty-two items given reflected the intelligent teaching and good taste of this School.

The most interesting characteristic of its teaching of the Nicolas Legat system is its emphasis on musical fluidity, ease of movement and the appreciation that the body has three dimensions. Even the youngest pupils, aged five and six, knew that a dancer has arms, shoulders and a head, not just legs. There were mistakes in the performance, of course, from time to time, but there was no clumsiness or the stiffness which one usually associates with school demonstrations. The partnering skill was good and most of the students showed a remarkable stage sense, even though the stage at the French Institute is slightly too small and has too much slope for dancing. Occasionally a student could not quite meet the demands made upon him or her, but certainly part of this impression was caused by nervousness.



John Gilpin in Festival Ballet's Spectre de la Rose
(*Photo: Roy Dixon*)

Consuelo Carmona and Angelo Andes had instilled a very creditable notion of Spanish dancing into their pupils, and the miniature ballets of Barbara Vernon, Valerie Preston and John Gregory were all delightful and deserve larger audiences. Ballet Workshop would do well to see them. Their simple but effective costumes were desgned by Peter Mevit Michael Morres and Peter Sager.

Among the pupils Josephine Greco, at 17, proves the value of the School's teaching and only needs now to develop her technique to professional firmness. Rafael Franco-Ricaurte, who is from Ecuador, has the advantage of an exotic appearance and a good stage presence. After only eighteen months at the School he shows astonishing progress and is definitely someone whom ballet companies should watch, for male dancers are not found or formed easily. Rena Marechale and Jennifer Rufus will be strong dancers, and the thirteen-year-old Ina Alexa has unusual lightness and musicality.

Where are they now?

NAME	*PREVIOUSLY WITH*	*HAS JOINED*
SONIA AROVA	Ballets des Champs-Elysées	Original Ballet Russe
TONI LANDER	Royal Theatre, Copenhagen	Original Ballet Russe
RICHARD ELLIS	Sadler's Wells Ballet	Teaching in Chicago
RONALD HYNE	Rambert Ballet	Sadler's Wells Ballet
VERA VOLKOVA	Teaching in Milan	Teaching in Copenhagen
PAULA HINTON	Original Ballet Russe	National Ballet, Australia
WALTER GORE	Choreographing in England	National Ballet, Australia
ANNETTE CHAPPELL	Folies-Bergere, London	Pantomime, Glasgow
IGOR BARCZINSKI	Folies-Bergere, London	Pantomine, Glasgow
ROLAND PETIT	Ballet de Paris	Choreographing films in Hollyoood
RENE JEANMAIRE	Ballet de Paris	*Hans Andersen* film, Hollywood
GORDON HAMILTON	Ballet de Paris	Musical at Marigny Theatre, Paris
COLLETTE MARCHAND	Ballet de Paris	Musical with Maurice Chevalier at The Empire, Paris
YVETTE CHAUVIRÉ	Various companies	Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo

The results of the work done by John Gregory and Barbara Vernon over two years are extremely encouraging. The School of Russian Ballet has certainly proved itself a truly creative centre, and everyone who saw this performance will watch their development with great interest.

Margaret Crossland

FILMS

THE best dancing in films is not always confined to musicals, and occasionally the balletomane may suddenly discover that he has "struck gold" quite unexpectedly. Such a moment comes in the long and rather ponderous *David and Bathsheba* at the feast for Uriah. The screen blazes into life with the entrance of Gwyneth Verdon as a court dancer. In a well conceived dance she leaps, twirls, twists, sways and mimes with a subtlety and suppleness that reminded one of the rare screen appearances of Tilly Losch. Her costume is beautiful, and mercifully the director allows the camera to record her dance fully, with only the slightest and most necessary breaks to forward the plot. One had the feeling that a round of applause might have rewarded her brief appearance, but for the conventions of the cinema.

GWYNNETH VERDON may also be seen in the new Betty Grable musical, *Meet Me After The Show*, which for some inexplicable reason was not considered good enough for the West End. It is an excellent entertainment, and the dancing throughout is first class—even the hoofing of Miss Grable, who would never claim that it was the *use* of her legs that brought fame.

With an un-named female partner, and also in a worth seeing. So also is a modern dance sequence, in which a group of young men in black, work a routine half in shadow, with very effective lighting, while a couple dance in silhouette on a bridge above.

Jack Hanson

BALLET IN ART

BALLET lovers who visit the new Winter Exhibition at The Royal Academy, open for three months from Dec. 8th will be richly rewarded for their trouble.

Entitled "The First Hundred Years of the R.A. 1769-1868", the exhibition presents not only the most superb examples available, of Reynolds, Lawrence, Turner, Gainsborough and Constable, but also many gems of ballet interest, in particular two paintings depicting the prototype of the present-day ballerina.

A. E. Chalon's *The Three Graces* (503), was painted exactly 100 years ago, and shows the three famous ballerinas, Taglioni, Grisi, and Ferraris grouped in charmingly graceful attitudes. In the early nineteenth century all the most famous dancers were to be seen in London, and this water-colour by the hand of a master artist is redolent in atmosphere of the romanticism of the period. No shadowy figments of a past age, these, but living breathless embodiments of all the graces, timeless as Art itself: Under their portraits the signatures of the three ballerinas are written in gold. Privately owned, this painting has never before been exhibited in our lifetime, and the chance to see it may never occur again.

The lighter side of a dancer's life is represented by Thos. Gainsborough's full-length portrait of the dancing *La Bacelli* (221) which was probably painted at Knole in 1782. Madame Giovanni Bacelli was the mistress of the Third Duke of Dorset, and is said to have danced at the Opera in Paris wearing the Duke's garter as a bandeau. Such an exploit sets one sighing rather wistfully that present-day etiquette should preclude the possibility of any modern ballerina showing similar enterprise and originality. La Bacelli was evidently a tempestuous character. Head thrown back and arm akimbo, she surveys us down the years; she wears a blue and white gown, beribboned and beflounced, with a ruffled train held aloft in the Spanish style, and coquettish blue ribbon encircling her wrist. A tambourine lies at her feet, and one leg is extended with pointed toe, and quite an appreciable display of ankle for the modesty of the times.

Admirers of David Paltenghi's ballet *Eve of St. Agnes* will like Sir John Everett Millais's painting of the same name (305). Lent by Her Majesty the Queen, it has not been exhibited since 1898, and quite apart from its subject interest, to look at, is a wonderfully aesthetic experience. The whole canvas glows with the golden sheen of old wooden panelling lit by firelight, and in the midst is Madeline, a maiden in a deep-sea green dress. She has let down her dark hair around her bare white shoulders, preparatory to retiring, and is gazing into her mirror, dreaming of Porphyro.

So many of our leading choreographers have gained inspiration from the masterpieces of British Art, and will, we hope, continue to do so, for ballet is a true synthesis of all the arts. The subject of Robert Smirke's *Don Quixote and Sancho Panza* (123) has already given us a great ballet, but Henry Fuselli's coldly horrific *Lady Macbeth Seizing the Daggers* (60) is just begging to be Helpmann's next essay in choreographic drama.

Another ballet in the Rambert repertoire is recalled by Etty's magnificent *Judgement of Paris* (240), though it may seem a far cry from Tudor's three hard-boiled browned-off night-club floozies, to these three undraped goddesses competing for Paris's favour. In conclusion we would urge you not to leave Burlington House without seeing the painting of one of whom it was said, "A star danced, and I was born"—the 17 year-old Ellen Terry in the glowing portrait *Choosing* (348) by G. E. Watts to whom she was married early in 1864, when she was not quite 17.

And when you do finally tear yourself away from this galaxy of beauty, let it be with the earnest hope in your heart that the greatest of our present-day ballerinas will go down to posterity in equally glowing terms and colours. so that in another hundred years time people will know just what the ballet meant to us here in England, in 1951.

Mary Roberts

N.B.—Figures in brackets refer to number under which painting is exhibited and catalogued.

Speak Up!

BE FAIR TO MALES !

SIR.—In every review of a new ballet, the male partner is kept in the background. The critic goes to great pains to tell us about the ballerina, and ends by saying something like "the ballerina was partnered by——" After all, where would the ballerina be without the premier danseur?

Such a perfect partner as Michael Somes gets one sentence at the end of a review, and one cannot even find praise of Alexis Rassine. Though these two have shared the Covent Garden leads since Helpmann left they get no more than "Fonteyn was partnered by Michael Somes" or "Rassine enjoyed a strenuous day dancing Albrecht". Many such dancers deserve a great deal more praise than they receive at present.—BRENDA M. STEVENSON, 34 College Street, Long Eaton, Notts.

NEGLECTED STREET DANCER

SIR.—Can one of your august critics explain why a company possessing so delightful a Street Dancer as Rosella Hightower persists in a mistaken policy of wilfully miscasting this important role in three performances out of five? Hightower was relegated to one evening and one matinee performance at The Cambridge.

Over the last decade we have seen sufficient bad casting, but some has been at least understandable, when no one else was available for the roles in question. The de Cuevas company, possessing one of the most delectable Street Dancers since Danilova, has no such excuse, and it would be interesting to hear on what grounds the casting is justified.

If this is an example of the "Anybody can do Anything" policy, I can only say it is sufficient to convert me irrevocably to type-casting, despite the attendant evils.—D. PHILLIPS, 15 *Overbrae, Beckenham.*

MORE NEW RECORDS

(*continued from page twelve*)

Invitation to the Dance (Weber-Berlioz). Royal Opera Orchestra, conducted by Hugo Rignold. Parlophone, E.11493, 6*s.* 10*d.*

When somebody translates the correct title of *L'Invitation a la Valse* in this way, I almost know what to expect from the performance. The music, even when orchestrated with all the resources of Berlioz, is still delicate and charming, and cries out to be treated as such.

This performance has about as much imagination as a metronome. You could count "one-two-three-one-two-three" all the way through it. All the "i's" are dotted and the "t's" meticulously crossed; but that is not music. And it certainly is not ballet. I have written before that ballet, particularly on records, needs to be conducted by a musician who can dance, in his mind if not with his body. Nobody dances in this performance, and it is far from being what ballet-lovers want.

Romeo and Juliet, Fantasy Overture (Tchiakowsky). Philharmonia Orchestra, conducted by Guido Cantelli. H.M.V. DBS.9705, DB.9706-7. One single-sided 12-in., 5*s.* 02*d.*, teo 12-in., 9*s.* 82*d.*

Tchaikowsky when writing the Shakespearean fantasy overtures had no idea of their use as ballet. They are, of course, "subjective" music: they do not describe the action of the stories concerned, but the personal reaction of the composer to those stories.

But the emotional and dramatic content has endeared them to modern choreographers, and *Romeo and Juliet* has been used a number of times for ballet purposes.

Here is a performance of the music which gives much point to this use. The orchestra is a flexible instrument which can take the impression of a conductor of genius. and Cantelli's depth of feeling and understanding of the dramatic qualities of the work have produced an excitement which almost leaps off the records as you play them.

You can imagine into the performance any particular choreography you wish, or none at all, according to whether you look on this work primarily as music or as ballet. But it does show what musicians can do.

RECORDS RECEIVED

Danse Macabre (Saint-Saens). Orchestre National de la Radiodiffusion Francaise, conducted by Maitre Edouard Lindenberg. Parlophone, Odeon series, R.20598. 9*s.* 8*d.*

Dance of the Hours (Ponchielli). Royal Opera House Orchestra, conducted by Hugo Rignold. Parlophone, E.11489. 6*s.* 10*d.*

Dance and Dancers . . . ABROAD

LES BALLETS DES CHAMPS-ELYSÉES

AFTER the Paris season in October, the company went for a short tour of North Africa without some of the principal dancers.

On their return to Paris, the company disbanded. As this has happened many times in its somewhat stormy history, we do not consider this to be final. The company has such a definite place in the ballet scene of to-day that we are certain that something can be done to get the company on its feet again. The gallant Monsieur Jean Robin has pulled the company through so many crises that we hope his spirit has not been finally broken.

No company, since the war, has developed such a good repertoire, no company has done more to determine the course of ballet in the past five years. Let us hope that somewhere in the world there are people who can see the need for the continuance of such a group and offer help.

MARQUIS DE CUEVAS GRAND BALLET

AFTER a most successful season at the Theatre de l'Empire in Paris, the company left for Tunis where they played over Christmas. After a short North African tour they will open in Cannes in February where they remain for a month.

The new works mounted during the Paris season were Rosella Hightower's *Scaramouche*, to Sibelius music and Raoul Pen de Bois decor; *Le Prisonnier de Caucase* by George Skibine to Katchatourian music and decor and costumes by Doboujinsky; and a revival of Ana Ricarda's *Del Amor Y de la Muerte* to Granados music with decor and costumes by Celia Hubbard. Some of these works will be featured in our "New Ballets" pages next month.

NEW YORK CITY BALLET

THE winter season which opened at City Centre on November 13 lasted until December 16. The new creations during the season included Balanchine's *Tyl Ulenspiegel* with Estaban Frances decorations and the usual Richard Strauss music. Balanchine also mounted his version of *Swan Lake* (Act 2). This had a black and white decor by Cecil Beaton. Some of the Ivanov choreography was retained but Balanchine added a great deal of new work for the *corps de ballet* and soloists and also some music from the original score which has never been used before. The result sounds interesting though probably more as a curiosity than anything else.

Balanchine also revived his *Apollo* for Eglevsky and Tudor mounted *Lilac Garden* for the company. The latter was first created for Ballet Rambert and has since been given by Ballet Theatre, and in Stockholm. Jerome Robbins' new work, *The Pied Piper*, to Aaron Coplands' clarinet concerto, had its world premiere on December 4.

The company will have another New York season in February when Agnes de Mille will mount a new work to Stravinsky's Dumbarton Oaks Concerto.

It is likely that the company will open at Covent Garden in July before their season at the Edinburgh Festival in August.

BALLET THEATRE

THE company continues on its long American coast-to-coast tour. There is every probability that the company will return to London some time during the summer. There is a rumour that Boris Kochno will produce the *Last Judgement* for the company, with music by Sauguet and decor and costumes by Tom Keogh. This is the work which was to have been given by Les Ballets des Champs-Elysées during their last Paris season. It was intended that Paula Hinton should have an important role. However, by the time the company closed its season at the Empire Theatre at the end of October, the composer had not written the music nor did he appear to know much about it.

CATHERINE LITTLEFIELD

WE very much regret to announce the death of Catherine Littlefield on November 19. She was one of the pioneers of American ballet. Readers will remember her when she appeared with her Philadelphia Ballet at the London Hippodrome in 1937.

She first appeared in Broadway musicals from 1923. Returning to her home in Philadelphia in 1935, she founded

the Littlefield Ballet (later to become Philadelphia Ballet). Two years later the company toured Europe with great success, one of the most popular works being her *Barn Dance*.

Since 1940 she mainly confined her activities to musicals. In Europe she will always be remembered as being the first person to bring ballets across the Atlantic which reflected the background of America.

LA SCALA, MILAN

AUREL MILLOSS will mount several works for La Scala during the coming year. These will include his version of Prokofiev's *Prodigal Son* which has already had choreography by Balanchine and Lichine, and a revival of the Massine de Falla *The Three-Cornered Hat*.

The new works will be *Spanish Rhapsody* to Ravel music, *The Wooden Prince* to Bartok music, and *Reflexes of Oblivion* to Respighi music.

STOP PRESS

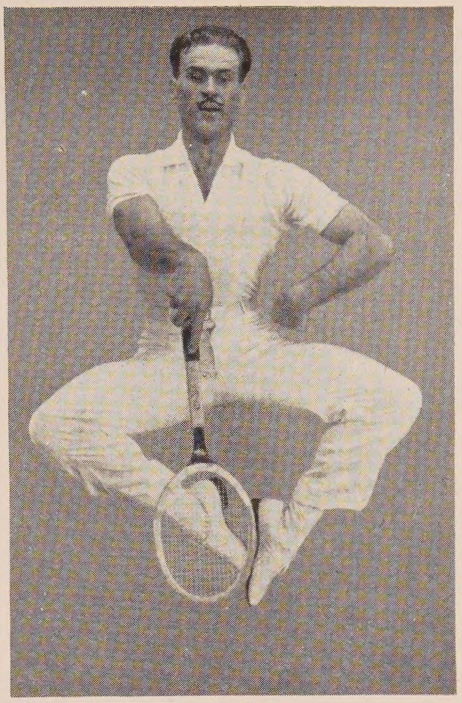
MARGOT FONTEYN returns to Covent Garden on February 9 in *Daphnis and Chloe*. Later in the month she will dance in *Tiresias*.

ANDRÉE HOWARD'S new ballet for Sadler's Wells is to be called *Mirror of Witches*. The designs are by a young designer, Norman Adams. The music is by Denis Apivor. The world *premiere* will be on March 4 at Covent Garden.

JOHN CRANKO'S new ballet has its first performance in April. This satirical work has so far not been finally named, though several titles have been suggested.

FREDERICK ASHTON flew to Hollywood on January 12 to choreograph a short film for Moira Shearer. This is to be called *The Three Loves* and replaces the film she was to have made, and had to give up owing to the fact that she is going to have a baby. Ashton will then go to mount *Tintagel* for New York City Ballet. He will be away for about two months. He already has offers from The Royal Theatre, Copenhagen, The Paris Opera, and La Scala, Milan. It is uncertain at the moment which of these he will accept. They would only be temporary and it does not mean that he has left Sadler's Wells.

ALICIA MARKOVA'S foot gave her trouble at the opening of Festival Ballet's Monte Carlo season and she returned home. She may be unable to dance for several months. The new ballet, specially created for her by Frederick Ashton, will not take place for the time.



André Eglevsky in a very different role from what we are used to. He is seen in the comedy role from Balanchines' A la Francaix given by New York City Ballet.

(Photo: George Platt Lynes)

Clubs

WILLESDEN

Willesden Ballet Circle, Sec: Christine Greenfield, 20 *Dean Road, N.W.2.*

THE first meeting of the recent season was held on October 9 at the Anson Hall. Clive Barnes spoke on "Three Choreographers—Ashton, Balanchine and Tudor". On November 20 a gramophone evening was arranged.

On Friday, December 21, the club arranged a most interesting demonstration of Siamese Dancing. This was performed by a group of Siamese students and was arranged by Saisvasdi Svasti. The dances, which were preceded by a short demonstration of *mudras*, obviously have a great affinity with the Indian classical dance, and they were performed with considerable grace and dignity. Of particular interest was a *Lantern Dance*, a festive court dance in which the dancers carry lighted lanterns. The Willesden Club is to be heartily congratulated on the originality and success of this venture.

A. C.

MANCHESTER

The Ballet Guild, Sec: Miss J. V. Whittaker, Church Street West, Radcliffe, Manchester.

EARLY in November The Guild presented their sixteenth Evening of Ballet, in The Ambulance Drill Hall. Talented young guest dancers appeared by kind permission of Miss Kathleen Lloyd. The programme included *Punch and Judy;* three short ballets by Kathleen and Audrey Lloyd, including a modern ballet *Stranger in New York;* and *The Little Mermaid*, by Hans Anderson, choreography by G. McDonald to Debussy music. C. A. Ewart contrived effective lighting, decor and costumes were by B. M. Ewart and J. V. Whittaker.

The club has again been visited by Miss Mona Inglesby, with Geoffrey Espinosa (who took class) and James Walker, leader of International Ballet's orchestra.

MERSEYSIDE

Merseyside Ballet Circle, Sec: Miss Cynthia Kelly, 63 Heath Road, Bebbington, Wirral, Rock Ferry 4658.

MISS Cynthia Kelly has taken over the Secretaryship from Miss Mooney. At the second meeting of the season Miss Mooney gave a talk "Construction of a ballet solo", demonstrated by Audrey Evans, a pupil of the Irene Hammond School, Chester. On October 30 Class was taken by Mrs. Trucilla Burge.

CLUB ADDRESSES. Others in previous issues.

Muse Ballet Club. Miss D. Ley, 13 Elmer Close, Enfield Road, Enfield, Middx.

North Wales Ballet Circle. Miss L. K. Green, Newstead, Allanson Road, Rhos-on-Sea.

Nottingham University Ballet Society. Union Room, Nottingham University.

Oxford University Ballet Club. Clement Crisp, Keble College, Oxford.

Phoenix Ballet and Dramatic Club. John Cooling, 7 Ravenscroft Avenue, London, N.W.11.

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Ballet Dates

SADLER'S WELLS BALLET AT COVENT GARDEN

January
21 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Elvin, Somes, Grey, Jackson, Shaw, Powell)
23 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Nerina, Hart, Powell, May, Jackson, Shaw)
26 (M) *The Sleeping Beauty* (Lindsay, Hart, May, Macmillan, Jackson, Powell)
26 (E) *The Sleeping Beauty* (Grey, Field, May, Elvin, Rassine, Powell)
28 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Grey, Field, Lindsay, Elvin, Rassine, Powell)
31 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Elvin, Somes, Grey, Jackson, Shaw, Powell)
February
2 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Lindsay, Chatfield, May, Vernon, Nerina, Powell)

RAMBERT BALLET

January
7 Theatre Royal, York.
14 Opera House, Scarborough.
February
11 Pavilion, Torquay.
18 Theatre Royal, Bristol (2 weeks
March
3 Arts Theatre, Cambridge.
10 White Rock Pavilion, Hastings.
24 Festival Theatre, Malvern.

INTERNATIONAL BALLET

December
24 Trocadero, Elephant and Castle (2 weeks)
January
7 Empire, Cardiff (2 weeks)
21 Gaumont, Chester.
28 Essoldo Theatre, Brighton.
February
4 Gaumont State, Kilburn.
11 Regal Cinema, Edmonton.
18 Granada, Woolwich.
27 (Wednesday) De Montfort Hall, Leicester (2 weeks)

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET IN CANADA AND AMERICA

January
14 Municipal Auditorium, Shreveport (1 day)
15 Robinson Memorial Auditorium, Little Rock (1 day)
16 Shrine Mosque, Springfield (1 day)
17 Music Hall, Kansas City (3 days)
21 Opera House, Chicago (7 days)
29 Kiel Auditorium, St. Louis (2 days)
31 Memorial Auditorium, Chattanooga (1 day)
February
1 Alumni Memorial Auditorium, Knoxville (1 day)
2 City Auditorium, Atlanta (2 days)
5 City Auditorium, Birmingham (1 day)
6 City Auditorium, Montgomery (1 day)
7 Municipal Auditorium, New Orleans (3 days)
11 City Auditorium, Daytona (1 day)
12 City Auditorium, Orlando (1 day)
13 Date County Auditorium, Miami (3 days)
16 Municipal Auditorium, Miami Beach (1 day)

FESTIVAL BALLET

December
25 Theatre de Monte-Carlo (5 weeks)
February
11 Grand Opera House, Belfast (2 weeks)
25 The Gaiety Theatre, Dublin (2 weeks)
Followed by a tour of England starting with Bristol (1 week), Southampton (1 week), Cardiff (2 weeks).

KATHERINE DUNHAM AND HER DANCERS

At the Cambridge Theatre, London, from January 7 for an indefinite season. Since its London season in 1948 the company has enjoyed a continuous success in Europe and now returns with new productions.

PAVINOFF BALLET

Spring Provincial Tour opens at The New Theatre, Cambridge, on February 11. Further dates will be announced shortly.

CONTINENTAL BALLET

Spring Provincial Tour opens at the Theatre Royal, Norwich, on February 17. Further dates will be announced later.

ORIGINAL BALLET RUSSE

At The Adelphi Theatre, London, for a season of two and a half weeks, from January 16.

Ballet Correspondents

(Abbreviations: b.c.—ballet correspondence; m.—male; f.—female; m.a.—my age; o.i.—other interests; l.s.—languages; p.r.—photograph requested.)

TERENCE HATTON, 208, Elmhurst Street, Clapham, London, S.W.4, wants b.c., m. age 20-30 in London. m.a. 21. o.i. opera, music, theatre, swimming, records.

TANYA SIMM, age 15, and **ANGELA SIMM**, age 11, 46, Windy Arbor Road, Whiston, nr. Prescot, Lancs., wants b.c., f. age 15-17 or 10-12, in Gt. Britain, France, Holland, Australia. o.i. films, theatre, stamps, tennis, books.

PATRICIA JENNINGS, 91, Colville Avenue, Anlaby Common, Hull, wants b.c., m. or f. age 17-22 in U.S., Europe, England. m.a. 18. o.i. theatre, reading, walking. p.r.

HUGH HAND, 33, Marnock Drive, Glenbrig, Lanarkshire, wants b.c. m. age 20-30 any country. m.a. 23. o.i. music, theatre, books, p.r., all answered.

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JEAN FOURAKER, 120, Pampisford Road, Purley, Surrey, wants b.c., m. or f. over 18. Germany, Sweden, U.S.A., England. m.a. 18, o.i. music, art, theatre, sailing, ls. French, German.

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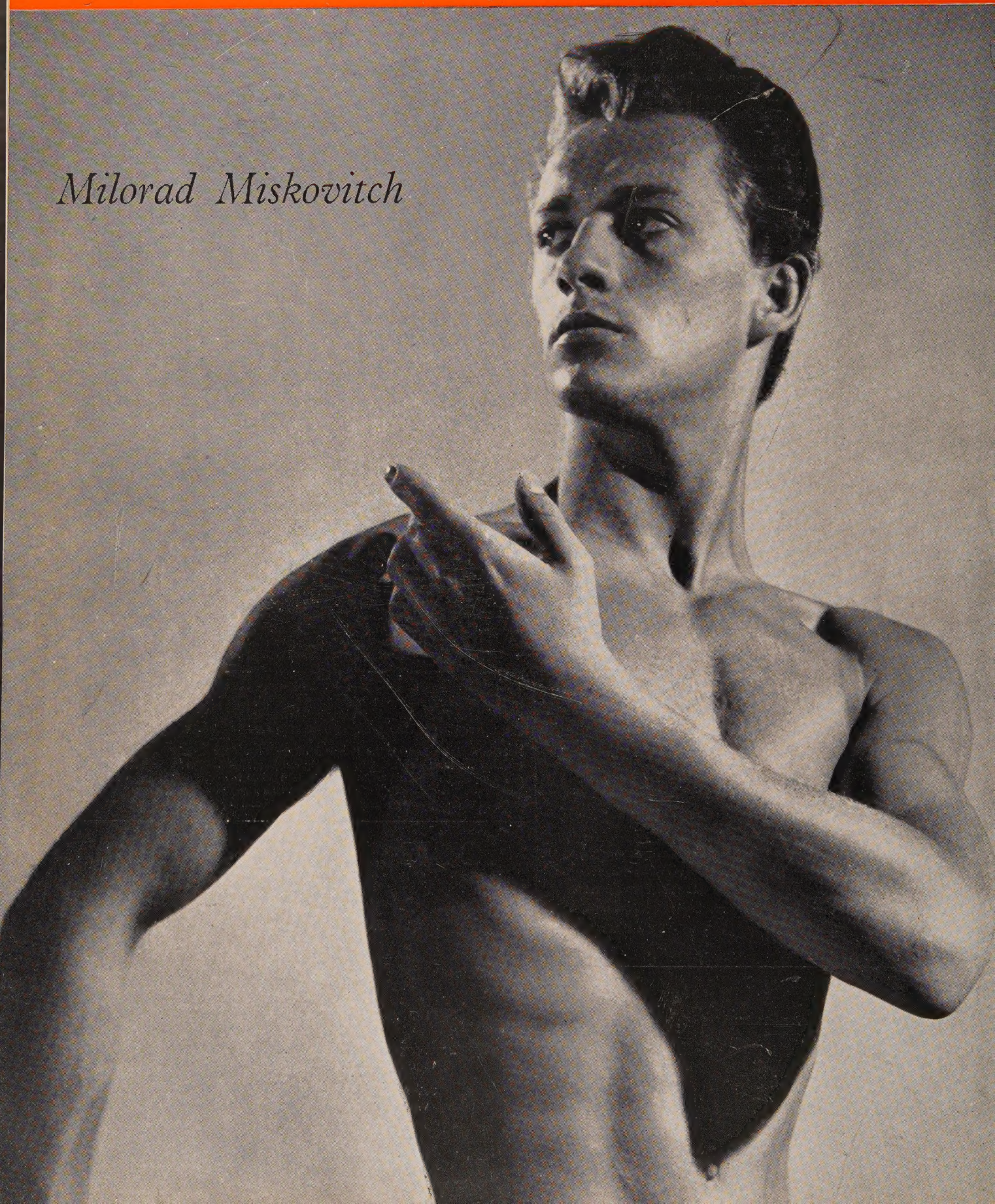

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